THE

THEATRICAL RECORDER:

BY

THOMAS HOLCROFT.

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ROSAMOND:

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS,

TRANSLATED FROM

THE GERMAN OF WEISSE.

BY FANNY HOLCROFT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HELMIGE, the second Husband of ROSAMOND.

LONGINUS, Exarch of RAVENNA.

ROSAMOND, Queen of the LOMBARDS.

ALBISSVINTHA, her Daughter by King ALBOIN, whom she murdered.

The SCENE lies in RAVENNA, in the Palace of LONGINUS.

ROSAMOND:

A TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Rosamond *and* Albissvintha

Rosamond.

THY heart is ill at ease: in vain the smile
Forces its languid way: the frequent sigh,
The sudden change, the crimson blush, the down
Cast eye, and keen suspicion's glance, betray
A soul perturb'd. Perhaps, I deeper read
Than thou'rt aware, divining motives which
To thee are still unknown.

Alb. Unknown! Oh no!
In voice of thunder shall the fearful tale
Be echoed, and re-echoed, till thou wak'st
From dreams of guilty love. And should thy conscience
Slumber on bed of roses, reckless still,
This hand shall rouse the serpent that lies hid
Beneath: I'll make——

Ros. What wilt thou? Speak! Shall thy
Ungovern'd rage for ever thus upbraid?
And shall I ever patient thus endure?
Maternal love, at length——

Alb. Forbear! First, say,
Who kill'd thy lord? who robb'd me of a sire?
Who pledg'd thy blood-stain'd hand, to recompense
The vile accomplice of a husband's murder?
Who fled, laden with regal spoils, to this
Domain, pursu'd by maledictions, which
An orphan people still pronounce? Prove 'twas
Not thee; then will I gladly hear thee arrogate
A mother's love.

Ros. Oh, were that love extinct,
This hand would now chastise thy insolence!
Thy life should——

Alb. Well I know 'tis exercis'd
In deeds of blood! (*with irony*) Thy tenderness lies at
The dagger's point!
Ros. Enough! I'll condescend,
For once, to justify my actions to
My daughter: thou shalt judge.
Alb. Go, conjure up
The dead, t' attest thy innocence! Oh, free
Thyself of guilt so horrible! Then shalt
Thou see me prostrate at thy feet, with all
A duteous daughter's love.
Ros. Whose murd'rous hand
Depriv'd my sire of life and empire? Was
It not thy father, who——
Alb. It was. But on
The sanguinary field, where murder stalks,
Mantled in honor's robe, with fearful stride,
And acts of frantic rage heroic are
Proclaim'd, my father slew thy sire.
Ros. Such is
The blind decision of th' ignorant mass,
Who, dazzled by the pompous pageantry
And new domain which conquest brings, mark not
The blood and treasure wantonly expended.
But thou and I have feelings more refin'd:
The conqu'ring warrior may be hail'd a god,
Exalted to the pinnacle of fame,
By narrow-sighted ignorance; but we
Shrink from the laurel, dripping blood; and, could
Our feeble arm but execute our will,
He should be headlong hurl'd from his triumphant car.
Alb. Why didst thou, at the altar, then, receive
My father's vows, and pledge eternal faith?
Ros. To be reveng'd! Ay! Thus the pow'r was mine!
Alb. And must thou wait revolving years to execute
Thy horrid purpose? Must thou first bestow
On me a wretched life, but to partake
Thy crime? What, give me a sire but to weep
His horrid fate, and thy more horrid guilt?
When did the thirst of vengeance seize thee? When
Peredeus and thy minion Helmige——
Ros. Forbear! Or my just wrath, appeas'd no more
By sweet maternal love, will, like Jove's thunder,
Burst o'er thy head. Thou know'st, if vengeance shake
Her forked adders in my breast, that blood
Alone can satisfy my rage; nor am
I to be mov'd by nature's weak dictates.
The sword of justice strikes, however loath,
Her arm. Be warn'd! Thy father's doom proclaims

The recompence this hand reserves for traitors.
Once more, be warn'd, I say.
Alb. Oh hide that hand:
'Tis bathed in a husband's blood! Methinks
Th' inhuman murder I behold!—My father!
Oh God! I see his struggles, hear his cries!
He still defends his life; th' assassins bind
Him, stifle his voice, plunge the murd'rous dagger in
His breast! He bleeds!—His dying eye is rais'd
In agony! He writhes! Again the steel
Reaches his heart; his noble spirit flies!
His wife, his murderess, exulting smiles!
My mother? Thou? Oh, no!
Ros. I am; or thou,
Haughty reviler, shouldst repent this insolence.
I mark thy deep-laid plan. Thou wouldst, by starts
Of well-affected passion, veil thy heart
From scrutiny, and artfully divert
Th' attention of thy mother.
Alb. Ah! What dost
Thou mean? What plan?——
Ros. Longinus—— (Albissvintha *looks disturbed*) Ha! In vain
Thou seek'st t' elude my penetrating glance:
Thy anxious eye betrays thee——
Alb. How? Is not
Longinus thy protector, and the friend
Of thy—— Oh, let me fly, far, far from courts
And thee! The fierce Hyena would I sooner trust
Than fiercer man. What, am I then accus'd?
Longinus?
Ros. Is he not thy peer? A king
In power, and as such respected? Bears
He not a mind of princely mould? A gallant
Spirit? And a gen'rous——
Alb. Generous? Why?
Because he shields thee and thy minion, queen,
From the just vengeance which pursues ye; deaf
To the imploring voice of injur'd innocence?
Because—— Oh name him not! I hate ye all;
Tho' still I venerate a mother's right.
Ros. Daughter, 'tis well! My fears were then absurd.
The ill conceal'd affection, which suffus'd
Thy cheek, was but a momentary spark?
Thou ne'er beheld'st our host with partial eye?
Thy heart ne'er cherish'd the fond hope that he
Might give his own in sweet exchange? Thou didst
Not try each winning art and grace to charm?
Alb. Ah, wherefore this humiliation? Am

I not sunk low enough? Think'st thou I'd wear
The rosy chaplet, or the studied smile,
Assume the wanton's arts and stoop to haughty man?
Know, Madam, could a thought so base but reign
A moment in my breast, this hand should guide
The poniard to th' unworthy heart, that could
So far renounce all dignity. Longinus is
Reported high of intellect, in deeds
A hero: but he is my foe. He stretch'd
The arm to save, not to avenge: he gave
My father's murderer protection. Ay,
His pow'r cements adult'rous bonds! They were
Seal'd in my royal father's blood! I love him!
Oh, yes! Had he chastis'd the base assassin,
Gratitude might have seduc'd my heart: but——

Ros. Thy noble pride and lofty speech, princess,
Are worthy of thee: tho' offended much,
I cannot but approve: I'm now convinc'd
Thou art sincere. Yet, that no doubts may rise,
Swear——

Alb. If thou'rt still incredulous, of no
Avail are vows. My word, methinks——

Ros. No! Thou
Must swear thy virgin bosom never heav'd
A sigh, or form'd a wish, in favor of
Longinus; that, were he the phœnix of
The world, thou never wouldst bestow a thought
Beyond indifference. Swear!

Alb. Amazement! Wouldst
Thou rob me of the sweetest joys of life?
Why bid me not now cease to live? What bar
Could my felicity oppose to thine?
Why should I never form the wish to be
A hero's honor'd choice? To share with him
Th' ineffable delights affection yields?
Is sensibility a crime? Cold apathy
A duty?

Ros. Yes. Love all the world, but not
Longinus. I cannot at present speak
More openly: to-morrow thou, perhaps,
Shalt hear my reasons. Swear!

Alb. No! I have cause,
Alas, too great, of hatred to the prince;
Yet, I'll not be compell'd to disavow
The virtues of a foe.

Ros. So obstinate?
And thou, with matchless arrogance, deniest thy love?
'Tis false! I read thy heart! it glows with passion for
Longinus! Well! Thou dost refuse to swear?

Hear, then, and tremble! By the sacred fount
Of honor, life, and love; nay, by thy dead
Father's tomb, where his ashes rest, if e'er
Thou giv'st, in word or look, the slightest mark
Of pref'rence, or if the prince breathe a vow
For thee, this dagger shall be buried in
Thy bosom; and perhaps —thy lover's heart!
Thou know'st me! Never is my wrath provok'd
In vain. My hate is boundless, as my love:
Profusely can this hand reward, and as
Severely punish. Pity ne'er withheld
My arm, once rais'd to strike. Be warn'd! I've said!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Alb. Oh, horrid mystery! Terrific rage! What means it?
Sense is bewilder'd, and distracting fears
Rob me of peace! Oh, Fate, must I so young
Deplore thy tyranny? Am I denied
All consolation, save my innocence?
Driven from home, my father slain, my mother—No.
'Twas she ordain'd the horrid deed! Bestow'd
Her treach'rous heart, her kingdoms, and her hand,
Upon th' adult'rous partner of her crimes.
Nay, should he ask my life, 'twould fall his sacrifice.
And shall I call this ruthless woman mother?
But thou, Longinus, thou, in whom my heart
Had center'd ev'ry hope, must thou increase
My woes? Three years it is since first I saw
Thee, at my father's court! How gallant was
Thy bearing, full of grace thy mien, thy genius
Comprehensive, and thy heart how noble!
Oh, soul afflicting change! I thought to find
Thee zealous to avenge my wrongs: but thou
Befriend'st the sanguinary pair. And yet
This heart haply betrays its weakness?
Can love's light bark, launch'd in tempestuous seas
Unknown, and driv'n by hatred and revenge,
Resist the breakers, rocks, and sands, and ride
The stormy main? Can Nature's order be
Revers'd? Are waking visions real? She vows
My death! And why? Because she knows, whoe'er
Aspires to me embraces my revenge,
And rears an altar on her minion's grave,
Or never will I hear the tale of love.
Longinus is the saviour of my foe!
Alas, what gen'rous arm shall now be rais'd
In my defence? Longinus, once I lov'd,
But now I hate thee.

SCENE III.—*Enter* LONGINUS.

Long. (*overhearing the last sentence, throws himself at her feet*)
Hate me? Wretched man!
Retract the cruel word: 'tis worse than death!
Alb. Heav'ns! Rise!
Long. Not till you look less sternly on me.
What is my offence?
Alb. Do you ask? Rise, prince;
Or I'll not listen.
Long. Long has secret anguish prey'd
Upon my heart. You fly me! Why? Long have
I wish'd to penetrate th' impervious gloom
Which clouds your brow. The angel smile is now
Replac'd by sad austerity; the cank'ring hand
Of silent grief has blanch'd the roses of
Your cheek; that voice, whose heav'nly harmony
Enrapt my soul, is seldom heard; and, when
You deign to speak, I list with trembling awe.
Alas, you hate me! Why? Is love a crime?
Deserves it your contempt? If so, chastise
Th' offender; for my bosom long has known
Th' imperious empire of your charms! I love you!
On you, sweet virgin, peace, nay life——
Alb. You love me?
Too well your actions prove the *strength* of your
Affection! Love it is, which makes you sanction guilt
Abhor'd of god and man! Love bids you shield
The murd'rer, from the veng'ance which his crime
Deserves! Oh magnanimity! You call
Him friend! Helmige, th' assassin of his king,
Stain'd with my father's blood, Helmige it is
You save. Your pow'r maintains the base adult'rer in
The undisturb'd possession of his theft,
Only to prove how fervently you love!
Long. Oh, spare me, Albissvintha! Cease t' upbraid!
Assimilate me not to souls like these!
The friend of Helmige? Call me slave, I shall
Not deem the epithet so base!
Alb. How? Must
I be the herald of your high deserts,
And sing th' heroic valour that defends
A wretch?
Long. Oh, sweetest, best of human beings,
Let not your justice be o'erpower'd by
Your feelings! Hear me, then you will forgive
Alb. Indeed! 'Twill ease my heart!
Long. You, princess, are
His saviour; you alone.

Alb. I? Then I am——
Long. Hear my defence. Had millions pleaded for
The queen, and her base minion, ne'er should they
Have found asylum here. Scarce had the horrid deed
Been spread abroad by fame when I receiv'd
A letter from the queen, who fled with you,
Her minion, and the treasures of fair Lombardy.
To tempt me to compassion, she propos'd
We should divide the spoil.
Alb. How! Avarice?
A passion so ignoble bribe the soul of——
Long. Oh, think me not contemptible? Is such
A vice the inmate of a heart like mine?
'Twas for your sake, alone, I granted them
Protection, princess: it was crav'd for you.
Could I refuse? Oh, no! I saw you in
A murd'rers fearful grasp; your right usurp'd;
Your honor, life, and happiness within
A robber's pow'r, who might with kindred villains waste
Your noble father's treasures. Ev'ry prince
Was eager to receive him; first, perhaps,
To plunder, then expel the wretch: and how
Could you have 'scap'd the ruin which had struck
The guilty? Virtue is no safeguard to the weak.
Power is a monster, ruthless and unsated.
Ah, say, can honor, peace, and safety find
A home, where only hatred, envy, pride,
Base avarice, and wanton lux'ry, dwell?
Alb. (*thoughtful*) I tremble!
Long. Think, had I refus'd, you now
Perhaps would be the wretched victim of
Some daring villain: or haply a wanderer
In barb'rous climes: or on th' uncertain main;
Conducted, ah, by whom? and led, ah, whither!
Despair your inmate, Death your only friend!
Have you beheld, when Fortune's sun is set,
The frantic wretch, cast on the reckless waves
Of wide extending ruin, vainly raise
The signal of distress; till desp'rate he
Collects his waining strength, makes a last effort,
And sinks, never more to rise! Banish fear!
This heart is noble; I will be your saviour.
Woe to the sacrilegious hand that should
Be rais'd to strike! Who dares t'offend you dies.
Alb. And must the traitor live in guilty pleasures while
My father's spirit vainly imprecates
Revenge? And will you not avenge the wrongs
That, bleeding in the grave, appal the soul?
Long. Helmige must live; and you, fair princess, must

Approve: he enter'd not these walls, nor brought
His consort and yourself, till I had pledg'd
My honor that his life was safe. I might
Avenge your wrongs; 'twould be an act of justice:
But is not perjury accurs'd of Heav'n?
No! Were the universe to justify
A violated promise, still, the prince
Should hold it sacred: you, sweet lady, tho'
You triumph'd in the act, would hate the traitor.
Alb. Thus tenderness of conscience makes you, prince,
Unjust; and crime must triumph unchastis'd!
I'll weary Heav'n with vain complaint: this arm,
Tho' weak, shall do me right. Fulfil your vow:
Defend the wretch 'gainst her you would protect.
Long. I only promis'd not to take his life.
A daughter may, but I could never, be
Excus'd. Yet think what dangers threaten you!
Alas! Your mother lives.
Alb. I fear not death;
In the base miscreant's blood she'll expiate
Her rashness and her crimes.
Long. And live to wreak
A fearful veng'ance on her daughter. No!
To save you, princess, she must fall.
Alb. My mother? Would
You be the noble emulator of
Helmige? Invite the deep curses and draw
Th' abhorrence of mankind upon your head?
Long. I would obey the will of Heav'n. No vow
Restrains my arm. Where is the horrid tragedy
To end? How many victims are to fall?
Myself perhaps the last! Yet hear th' advice
Of true affection, Albissvintha: be
Not rash! I know that virtue's zeal inflames
Your heart, but——
Alb. Is not regicide condemn'd
By human laws? Is not the sov'reign bound
To strike their daring violator? I
Must be th' avenger of my wrongs, if Heav'n
Avenge them not.
Long. Confide in Providence.
Her arm but spares a while to strike tenfold.
Alb. If Heav'n so long delays to punish, justice
May be forgotten.
Long. Yes, were time a span,
And years were hours. But that high Being, who
Since first the world began, made punishment
And crime inseparable, will not overlook
The wretch.

Alb. 'Tis well! Then I must hush my wrongs,
Bend to th' assassin's yoke, and witness the
Sincerity of your affection.
Long. I'd die
To prove it! I'm your slave; but rank me not
With villains! ask me not to win a heart
So noble by foul treason! Hundreds might
Be found, who would by means so base obtain
Your favor; but their treach'ry would excite
Your scorn.
Alb. Tho' vengeance fire my soul, my heart
Cannot condemn your generous refusal:
Yet, tell me, where exists my brave avenger, prince?
For him alone my hand I have reserv'd,
E'en tho' my heart arraign the choice. You love me,
And I, perhaps, am not insensible.
Long. What is't I hear? Oh bliss ecstatic! Let
Me fly to Rosamond, entreat——
Alb. Forbear!
Rash youth! What would you? Speak!
Long. Demand your hand,
Since I possess your heart.
Alb. Once more forbear,
Unless you'd meet me in th' abyss of death!
Long. What is't you say? Is death to happiness
So near allied?
Alb. The deadly serpent lurks
Beneath the rose.
Long. I've but to speak a word:
I know she'll not refuse.
Alb. Breathe but that word
And fell destruction suddenly shall strike.
Th' assassin, unchastis'd, shall triumph in
His guilt; and Albissvintha's ashes shall
Be scatter'd to the wind.
Long. Woe to the——
Alb. Prince,
Your menaces are vain. Here swear t' observe
Eternal silence, or only t' impart
Your love to me! Nay, should my hand be offer'd with
Persuasive art, you must reject the gift.
Obey me, prince, or speak and I shall cease to live!
Long. Strange mystery! Oh Heav'n! Must I conceal
The wish that makes existence dear? My heart
Will speak in ev'ry look! My sighs——Oh say
The cause?
Alb. Question me not; but, if you love,
Be secret, or you will repent! [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Long. (*alone*) She flies
And leaves me in a labyrinth of doubt!
My hopes were center'd in th' angelic maid!
She said she lov'd; but, ah, if I'm belov'd,
Why did she warn me not to speak? No, no;
She loves me not! She only fed my hopes
To urge—yet, no! Angels may err, but guile belongs
Not to the noble mind. Perhaps her griefs,
Her never sleeping fears, urge her to loathe
Sweet Hymen's bonds? It is most like. Her will
Is law: must I conceal the passion of
My heart! reject the blessings which my soul
Most covets!—Heav'ns! How cruel is the task!
Love, indignation, and despair, by turns,
Distract my soul! [*Exit* Longinus.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Rosamond *alone.*

Rosamond.

I LOVE! Oh, yes; I can no longer veil
My wishes from myself! This heart, Longinus,
Pants, languishes, for thee! For thee alone
I live; and thou, with equal ardor, must
Return my love. Nor Heav'n nor Hell shall save
Th' audacious wretch, who dares oppose me. Ha!
Helmige, thou first must bleed. 'Twere well to probe
Longinus to the heart: his rival shall
Not die, unless his death can serve my love.
The prince accepted not the proffer'd treasure;
His silence and embarrassment convince
Me that a secret sorrow preys upon
His mind. Respect, dread of Helmige may seal
His lips: his actions are constrain'd; his words
Confus'd; he seems t' avoid us. I am yet
Allow'd to bear away the palm of beauty:
Oh, rapture! Does he love? Nay, should his heart
Acknowledge not my charms, riches may tempt him?
Proudly he declin'd the proffer'd gifts; yet
He's mortal, and as such may be seduc'd:
For riches are the magic spell by which
Ambition, love, and glory, are entranc'd.
This hand shall freely make him lord of all

My treasures, and myself; nor monarchs would
Disdain the gift. Woe to thee, prince, if I
Am scorn'd! But, if thou meet'st my wishes, little shall
I scruple to remove the sorry tool
Of my revenge. But here he comes!

SCENE II.—*Enter* HELMIGE.

Ros. Whom dost
Thou seek?
Hel. Whom should I seek, in these abodes,
But thee? Since mute contempt and silent curses are
The only favors thou and I can hope.
In vain we proudly deem ourselves secure.
Who will, from courtesy alone, defend
The lives of regicides? Longinus——
Ros. Ha!
Thou know'st him not; his noble heart——
Hel. And can
That elevated soul so easily
Forgive a crime, which he deems worthy death?
Ros. He is the friend of man; the saviour of
Th' unfortunate.
Hel. But he no less, if Fame
Be not a lyar, is th' invet'rate scourge
Of vice. 'Tis true, I judge not that a crime
Which just revenge on thy part, love on mine,
Impell'd us to commit. Love justifies
The deed: but think'st thou, queen, the prince will judge
With equal lenity? The prejudices of
Mankind rise up in arms, because we have
Usurp'd th' avenging pow'r of Heav'n: they call
Us robbers, for they do not share the plunder.
Say, shall Longinus stand aloof, despise
Th' accustom'd policy of men, and grant
Us refuge from pure generosity?
Absurd! Man never yet gave pasture to
A lamb who would not shed the victim's blood.
Ros. Why then refuse to share our proffer'd treasure?
Hel. Haply to seize upon the whole. Why take
A part when all is in his grasp? Should he
Avow himself our foe, where should we find
Protection? We are in his power: he
Has but to give the word, our treasures and
My life become his sacrifice.
Ros. He'll not
Betray us.
Hel. Where is our security?
Ros. His princely word.

Hel. His word? Oh, queen, and canst
Thou urge that plea? Is not a royal promise
Synonimous to perjury? When princes swear,
They're perjur'd in their hearts. Didst thou not pledge
Thy faith and love to murder'd Alboin?
Was not thy vow a breath of air? Grant he
The wish possess, pretences are not wanting
To plunge us down the precipice. He has
But to relate our history to be
Absolv'd by ev'ry heart. His emperor,
In whose high grace he stands unrival'd, will,
If he demand it, readily pronounce
Our death. I shudder! We are on the brink
Of ruin! 'Tis a miracle that we
Have hitherto escap'd th' impending storm.
Ah! Could we fly, could we avoid the danger!
Ros. But how?
Hel. I've long, oh queen, observ'd the prince:
If not by avarice, he's urg'd by love
To grant us refuge.
Ros. (*warmly*) Love say'st thou? For whom?
Hel. Why this surprise? Are its effects unknown
To us? Is not thy daughter beauteous, and
The prince a youth of glowing soul? Wouldst thou condemn
His choice?
Ros. Yes! Is she not the daughter of
A king?
Hel. Love tow'rs above supremacy
Of rank.
Ros. But rank asserts her higher claims,
Nor brooks alliance with inferior blood.—
Say, is Ravenna's Exarchate a kingdom?
Hel. Where is our own? and where our dignity?
A vagrant monarch is beneath the serf
Whose hut he makes his home. Longinus is
Our lord: we are his subjects: there is nought
We can deny that he has not the pow'r
To seize. What tho' the blood he sheds be royal,
Can he not revel in't? and happy we
While he now smiles and deigns to spare our lives.
Ros. 'Tis well! But what is to be done?
Hel. We must,
If possible, secure him in our int'rest by
The gift of Albissvintha's hand! The hope
Of being master of our treasures! Lord
Of Albissvintha, if he love, and, as
Aloud he vaunts, if Virtue be his god,
Gratitude, nay all, will bind him to

Maintain his faith: but now his promise is
A bubble, which a breath of air destroys.
Ros. But should Longinus be averse.
Hel. No, queen;
Or what I have observ'd is all illusion.
Ros. What
Hast thou observ'd?
Hel. That which a studied silence oft
Betrays: Longinus locks a secret in
His breast! 'Tis plain, either he craves our wealth,
Or tender wishes prey upon his heart.
Nay, more, if I am not deceiv'd, whene'er
He meets the princess, love and rapture wanton in
His eye.
Ros. And this thou hast observ'd. We must
Without delay wind out the secret! Woe be
To him, if he——Enough! We'll learn what hopes
Or perils now remain. I tremble not!
All potent as he is, two deities,
Deceit and Artifice, protect me. We
Have gold sufficient to corrupt the base
Court herd: if he reject our friendship, strike!
One murder more!—I know thou'lt not refuse
Here to perform the service which thou didst
Thy king. The coward, cas'd in coat of mail,
Is more exposed than he who fearless bares
His bosom to the naked spear. Go! Free
Me from suspense! Propose my daughter with
The unreserv'd donation of our riches:
Try if Longinus will refuse a gift
Like this.
Hel. But would not the proposal come
With better grace from thee? Thou art——
Ros. No; I
Could not endure th' indignity of a
Denial. Rage would——(*aside*) Ah, should it be true!
——Let this humiliating offer be
Envelop'd in the garb of specious love:
If 'tis refus'd—thou know'st my vengeance has
No bounds.
Hel. Oh, queen, Longinus will not spurn
Fair Fortune's richest gems. Methinks I see
Him at thy feet, pour out the raptures of
His soul—— But here he comes.
Ros. Farewell! (*aside*) Woe, woe
To thee, Longinus, if—— [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Enter* LONGINUS.

Long. Why fled the queen?——

Perhaps, my lord, I came unseasonably.
You were conversing?
Hel. No! You never, prince,
Can be unwelcome: are you not our saviour?
A god bestows both life and peace: that god
We see in you.
Long. No flattery, my lord.
Praise is the hallow'd meed of noble actions.
Hel. What is more noble than, unsway'd by int'rest,
To save the fugitive proscrib'd? Oh that
You would accept our proffer'd gifts! 'twould be
A poor acknowledgment of your deserts.
Long. I'll not be brib'd to noble acts: nor is
The merit great which must be fee'd. Once more,
I granted you protection to——
Hel. Enough!
No words can speak our gratitude: it is
A painful burden, and fair Rosamond
This moment fled to give free vent to her
Affliction! Well she knows how much we owe
You, prince! Accustom'd with a royal hand
To recompense desert, she now tenfold
Regrets the loss of empire: fain she would
Have kingdoms to bestow; but she entreats
You to declare if any other gift——
Long. I am content: I crave no gift. Since I've
Enough, why covet more? Is gratitude
A burden to the queen? Tell her I am
Sufficiently rewarded by the trust
Which she repos'd in me: that, if a wish——
Hel. Ah, speak! Yet let me first propose a gift,
Prince, worthy of yourself. Oh, that I may
Have met your wish! That you may lend a willing ear!
Long. You then suspect?
Hel. That Albissvintha may
Not be displeasing to you; that perhaps
Your heart in silence feels the power of
Her charms. Say but a word and she is yours——
[*A pause on both sides.*
With all our treasure for her portion. Prince,
Your silence speaks consent: the crimson tint,
Which dyes your cheek, betrays the secret of
Your heart. Swift on the wings of gratitude
I fly——
Long. (*recovering a little from his embarrassment*) Remain,
my lord! Where would you go?
One moment only!
Hel. Where? To Rosamond!
Long. The queen? Is she then willing to——

Hel. E'en so!
She longs t'embrace Longinus by the name
Of son.—You haply fear the princess may
Not estimate the value of a heart
Like yours? Have not her blushes long betray'd
Her inclination?
Long. (*a little warmly*) Never! I am honor'd by
Your offer: birth so noble, beauty so
Uncommon, qualities so rare, deserve
The empire of a world, the homage of
A heart—more fortunate.
Hel. What is't I hear?
Longinus, this dissimulation is
Unworthy of you! Men exalt your name
To adoration: ev'ry tongue proclaims
Your god-like virtues: can you, prince, alone
Plead ignorance? The sun half veils the splendor of
His rays, yet we can feel his genial glow.
Long. Pray cease exaggerated praise. Excuse
Me, but, methinks it smells too rank of flattery.
Knows Albissvintha this?
Hel. Not yet.
But granting she's insensible to your
High worth, the queen, my lord, commands: can she
Resist a mother?
Long. Then I must refuse.
That Hymen is accurs'd, where force usurps
The throne of love, and secret tears bedew
The nuptial veil. If I am wretched, I
Will grieve alone; barbarians only seek
Relief in seeing others grieve!
Hel. 'Tis thus
The noble lover feels! And love is e'er
A prey to visionary fears: but why,
Prince, doubt? Have I not said her bosom is
Susceptible to your high worth? Your hand
Is haply th' object of her dearest wish,
But virgin modesty forbids the hope
Appear. Her heart, perhaps, now sorrows that
Longinus offers not his own. Go! Seek
Her, prince; plead with the eloquence of love;
Learn that our gen'rous friend has nought to fear.
Her heart——
Long. (*disturbed, aside*) What shall I say? (*aloud*) My
lord! Excuse
Me—I!—To spurn the gifts of fortune is
To own ourselves unworthy to possess
Them, and—it cannot be! My heart——
Hel. May beat

For some more beauteous virgin; and to wed
The princess would destroy your peace?
Long. My lord——
She is the phœnix of the universe!
I am—— Permit me to retire!
[*Exit* Longinus *in perturbation.*

SCENE IV.

Hel. (*alone*) What can
This mean? He stammers, flies, and leaves me rack'd
By doubt, astonishment, and fear! Here lies
The dreadful gulph! And can it not be fathom'd?
He scorns our gifts! rejects the princess! How?
Young, handsome, and ambitious, craves he not
So glorious a distinction? Feels he not
The passions prone to youth? Has virtue chill'd
The warmer glow of love? Oh, no! He is
A hypocrite! He loves not Albissvintha; but
Is there no other object, who inflames
His senses? Ha! A second Trojan brand,
Which lights to my destruction? Oh! Did he
Not ask if Rosamond propos'd the tie?
When force was mention'd, flam'd he not with rage?
I shudder at the thought! Alas! Too oft
Our passions drown the eloquence of virtue!
'Twas love for thee, oh Rosamond, impell'd
This hand to shed a sovereign's blood! Art thou
Less beauteous? Is Longinus blind? 'Tis true,
Thy beauty is not in its dawn: but some
Prefer the milder evening rays, which shed
A light, deliciously serene, to mid-day beams.
'Tis so! Fear, like a torrent, overwhelms
My soul! Should his dread arm be rais'd to strike,
No shield can save me from the mortal blow.
A second Alboin to this new Helmige
I soon shall fall! And Rosamond—ah, can I
Trust her? The tiger, when he'ssatiate
With blood, wears a deceitful calm; but, when
His thirst revives, he darts with new-born fury on
His prey. How shall I act? Already I
Have join'd her in one crime. I must not rouse
Her anger by distrust: she urg'd the offer,
And vow'd revenge, should he refuse. Unless
She save me from th' impending mischief, I
Shall ne'er enjoy the bliss, which to attain
I plung'd so deep in blood and endless guilt.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—Albissvintha *and* Helmige.

Helmige.

ONLY a word, princess!
Alb. What wouldst thou say?
Thou kill'dst thy sovereign; haply thou wouldst kill
His daughter. Ah! streaming blood methinks
Flows from thy hand——Avaunt! or I shall catch
The stain! Avaunt!
Hel. Thy happiness——
Alb. Talk'st thou of happiness? Hyena like,
Thou smil'st to lure me to destruction. Hence!
Go to the queen! She'll listen to thy tale;
Compel her to commit a second murder;
I still remain——
Hel. Alas, I feel my crime.
Detest me, if thou wilt, but I must speak.
The queen it was who urg'd me to the deed:
But for her Syren arts, I ne'er had shed
Thy royal father's blood.
Alb. 'Tis generous
In thee to cast the odium of thy crime
On her thou hast seduc'd. The wretch, condemn'd
T' escape the death he merits, implicates
Th' abettor of his vices. Alboin,
My noble sire, was murder'd, wretch, to seat
Thee on the throne of Lombardy: but thy
Base hopes were vain; a gen'rous people would
Not brook a murd'rer for their lord: they drove
Thee ignominiously from home and empire.
The distant lightnings flash, pregnant with death!
They'll reach thy heart! tho' haply I shall fall
The victim of thy guilt.
Hel. Speak but a word,
And we are safe!
Alb. I?
Hel. If Longinus lead
Thee to the altar——
Alb. Peace! Woe to the prince,
Should he demand the gift from thee! I'll not
Receive a bridegroom at thy hand.
Hel. This pride
Becomes thee not: thy safety, nay, thy life,
Depends on mine: were I to fall——
Alb. Were life
A gift of thine, soon should the dagger save

Me from the shame of owing aught to thee.
Restore my murder'd father! Ah! Revive
The dust from which he sprung, regenerate
The dead, and I'll die blessing thee.
Hel. The prince——
Alb. Longinus? Thou'rt deceiv'd! He's not so base
As, for thy sake, to grant us refuge. No!
Say thou'lt depart: then see if gentle force
And friendly offers will detain thee? Go,
Divest thyself of thy ill-gotten treasure!
Demand protection of some other prince!
See, barbarian, if thou'lt meet aught except
The execrations and the death thy crimes
Deserve! 'Tis true, the prince receiv'd thee; but,
'Twas not for thee his noble heart felt pity.
Hel. For whom then was't?
Alb. I dare not, cannot, will
Not answer: ask Longinus, or my mother.
[*Exit* Albissvintha.

SCENE II.

Hel. (*alone*) 'Twas no wild conjecture! 'tis as I surmis'd!
Oh, my foreboding heart! She has divin'd
The truth: this seeming virtuous prince burns with
Unlawful wishes, and my blood must quench
The raging flame! (*muses*) Yes, I must fly! Alone?
What then avails my crime, if Rosamond be lost?
Perhaps, she loves me still! Perhaps, she'll not
Refuse to be the partner of my flight!
Deceitful sex! Since first I was ensnar'd
To guilt and ruin by your wiles, I ne'er
Have known a moment's peace. Vice is th' abyss
Where death and mis'ry dwell! She'll drag me down!
My only refuge is in sudden flight.
Ha! Here she comes.

SCENE III.—*Enter* Rosamond.

Ros. Helmige, tell me, how met
Longinus our proposal?
Hel. 'Tis refus'd
With scorn.
Ros. Indeed! Is't possible?
Hel. Yes; he
Rejects a gift which kings would pant to gain.
Nay more, perhaps, he dares——
Ros. Ha! What?
Hel. Oh, queen,
Say am I worthy of thy heart? Say dost
Thou love me still?

Ros. Why these vain doubts? They wound
Me much. Canst thou suspect me, Helmige? Thou,
To whom I pledg'd my faith in blood? Seal'd not
A murder'd king the bonds of our affection?
Our happiness consists in mutual love:
The perils which surround us but cement
Our union: I am thine in ev'ry storm
Of fate.

Hel. Enough! Come to my arms! Hope thrills
Again my raptur'd soul, and I defy
The threat'ning tempest: I'll be thy defence,
As thou art mine, my love!

Ros. I know it well.
But say, what dares the prince?

Hel. To love thee!

Ros. (*scarcely able to conceal her joy*) Love me!
Thy fears do but deceive thee, and create
A phantom. That which most we dread we most
Believe.

Hel. Oh Rosamond, 'tis no illusion!
He loves thee, and my ruin is decreed.
Generosity well acted, and his
Refusal of the princess with our proffer'd gifts,
Too plainly speak the truth. Would he reject
Thy beauteous daughter and her portion, queen,
If matchless charms and nobler stores did not
Inflame his heart? And who but thee may boast
Such hoards inestimable? Thou, and all!
All are in his grasp! On my grave, there will he
Sacrifice t' ambition and to love!

Ros. Ha! What a word was that, Helmige! Oh no,
If but a shadow of desire escape
Longinus, swift-wing'd vengeance shall o'ertake him!
Methinks thou err'st. Would he so long have lock'd
The secret in his breast?

Hel. Could he at first
Declare his lawless wishes? He was silent, till
He hop'd his passion would be listen'd to
With favorable ear!

Ros. Indeed! Soon shall
His hopes meet their reward! The friendly steel,
Or poison more secure, shall do me right
Within these palace walls.

Hel. My heart o'erflows
With love and gratitude! But 'tis a desp'rate act!
Thou mayst escape his wild desires, but not
The veng'ance of his people, who adore
The prince, and watch with filial care his safety.

With all our treasure let us then be gone.
Wide as the universe shall be our home.
Ros. We must not rashly act. First let me solve
Or well confirm thy doubts. Longinus shall
Declare his love.
Hel. And may I not first meet
My doom ?
Ros. Helmige ! Unmanly 'tis to live
The slave of fear, and mean distrust : thou fli'st
From shadows : had I not impell'd thee, ne'er
Wouldst thou have dar'd t' achieve a deed of greatness.
Alboin had overcome thee, but that
I guided thy weak arm ! Enough, I soon
Will free thee of all fear.
Hel. Success attend thee !
Ros. Again I'll offer Albissvintha to
The prince : if he refuse her, I'll reply,
We can no longer deign t' accept his favors.
All our doubts are thus resolv'd : should he not
Oppose our absence he may then be safe ;
But if he dare insult me, Alboin's
Sad fate shall teach him how a Rosamond
Can punish. It were best perhaps to fly
Alone.
Hel. In life or death I'll follow thee !
Thou art my all. Existence, robb'd of thee,
Were but a curse.
Ros. Go, send Longinus here.
Soon shall I fly, Helmige, back to thy arms :
But first, as thou'rt accustom'd, take a bath ;
Then love and rapture wait to make thee blest.

[*Exit* Helmige.

SCENE IV.

Ros. (*alone*) Stream out my joys ! Exult ! How ecstasy
And love o'erpow'r my soul ! I pant t' embrace
The noble youth, and call him Lord. Much as
I loathe thy presence, Helmige, it must be
Endur'd, till thou art safe within my toils.
Longinus comes. I scarcely can repress
The rapture of my heart.

SCENE V.—*Enter* Longinus.

Long. Fair queen, I wait
Your pleasure : haply I have given you
Offence ? Yet, if you knew——
Ros. Offence ? Oh, no !
We cannot regulate our inclinations :

Love ne'er will brook command. I offer'd you
The only gift, by which I could repay
Your generosity.
Long. Inestimable gift!
Yet, I——
Ros. Enough! Your heart is pre-engag'd.
Long. How? I——
Ros. And who can blame you, prince? You love,
And are belov'd; who can resist your merit?
A queen inflames your heart! But longer I
Will not remain. Alas, I hop'd t' have shar'd
Our treasure with you, but you scorn it.
Long. How?
You wish——
Ros. To fly where you shall ne'er again
Behold me.
Long. Fly? Has not my word been pledg'd?
My faith is dearer far to me than life!
Ros. Till faster bonds unite us, prince, this heart
Will tremble: know I not how easily
A prince can break his faith?
Long. And were this perfidy
The universal law of princes, I
Would stand unperjur'd! The protection which
I granted Helmige——
Ros. Is he worthy your
Protection?
Long. Granting he is not, my word
Is pledg'd, and never was it broken!
Ros. Prince,
Your generosity misleads you.
Long. Queen,
Each man must take his conscience for his guide.
Enough! I know my duty: never shall
Your husband or yourself lament the trust
You plac'd in me. Remain!
Ros. I understand:
You would rejoice if Helmige were——but you
Will not embrue your hands in blood? 'Tis well:
Others less scrupulous may do the deed.
Long. (*aside*) What means she?
Ros. Nothing, prince, can now detain me.
Let Helmige, Albissvintha, and myself,
Depart your everlasting debtors. No
Request, howe'er extravagant, can be
Refus'd, no wish can soar too high: then speak.
Long. (*aside in perturbation*) Ah, if I durst! but, no! (*to* Rosamond) Would you remain——

Ros. It cannot, must not, be!
Long. What can you fear?
Can I a pledge more sacred than my honor give?
If so, demand it. Will your flight allay
The storm you dread?
Ros. No, prince: but longer can
We not intrude. Our treasures and our daughter you
Refuse: my heart is noble and nobly would
Discharge the debt I owe: I still remember
I am a queen!
Long. Consent to stay, and I
Become your debtor: ah, this heart is not
So void of selfishness as you suppose!
Ros. (*looking fixedly at him*) Speak freely, prince.
Long. I cannot, Madam: so to speak
Would be dishonorable!
Ros. I'll take
The guilt on me! Nay, speak. Sir, 'tis not love,
But bashfulness, which is reprov'd in man.
You blush! Have I too deeply prob'd your heart?
[Longinus *stands in mute astonishment.*
Awake, Longinus, from these gloomy dreams!
My bosom haply shares the silent grief
Your blushes now betray: in vain you would
Conceal it, prince; you love and dare not own
Your passion.
Long. How? You think——
Ros. That sympathy
Unites our hearts. You love, and are belov'd!
Yes, happy youth! Your wish is granted! Here
Will I remain; your arms shall be my haven!
Soon shall propitious love dispel these clouds,
And sooth your soul to peace. [*Exit* Rosamond *hastily.*

SCENE VI.

Long. (*calling after her*) Queen! Rosamond!
You are mistaken! Hear me! Ah! she's gone!
Alas! The horrid mystery is now
Too clear! Oh, Albissvintha, why didst thou
Not speak? Longinus lov'd by Alboin's
Adulterous and sanguinary wife?
Why did I not at once declare my thoughts,
And silence hopes so wicked? Yet thy caution,
Sweet Albissvintha, seal'd my lips. She is
An enemy most dangerous and deep:
We're in her power: how shall we escape?
Chains, daggers!—Yet, my honor pledg'd; the trust
Repos'd in me; can they be violated? Would

Not Albissvintha imprecate the deed?
Avaunt the impious thought: blood calls for blood,
But Heav'n guides not the noble arm to plunge
Th' avenging dagger in the culprit's heart.
No! virtue alone safely can conduct
Us to the noble goal of happiness! [*Exit* Longinus.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Albissvintha *alone.*

Albissvintha.

RESTLESS I wander, tortur'd by love, fear,
Revenge, and hate! Where shall I seek a friend?
A Helmige? fie! The coward slave of vice!
The servile instrument of Rosamond!
The partner of her crimes! Dare I still call
Her mother? No! A father's blood eras'd
The name! Longinus, thou alone art worthy of
My heart. Yet, have I not forbidden thee
T' avow thy passion? Caution'd thee t' avoid me?
What demon instigates the queen? She wars
Against her lover's wish. She threatens me
With death! And can I fear to die for thee,
Longinus? Ah! How sweet were such a death!
But vow'd she not thy ruin too? Oh cruel queen,
If thou no longer feel'st a mother's love,
Must thou destroy the noblest of the noble?
Ah, were he not involv'd, this heart would brave
Her fury! Heav'ns! How dark, how fearful is
The labyrinth I tread! No clue can love
Discover! Ha! She comes! (*going*)

SCENE II.—*Enter* Rosamond.

Ros. Why go'st thou? Stay!
Aid me to gain a dear-bought victory.
(*aside*) Bold trait'ress, thou shalt be the minister of thy
Destruction! (*aloud*) Albissvintha, soon thy wish
Shall be accomplish'd: soon I shall again
Be worthy of thy love: all obstacles
Are now remov'd: revenge and fortune wait
To crown thy hopes.

Alb. Alas, thy vengeance most
Is wreak'd on me.

Ros. Mean'st thou th' injunction which
I laid on thee? Fear not: 'twill be explain'd

To thy content. Let this suffice! Now mark
Me, Albissvintha: Helmige shall not live.
Alb. He lives, and long will triumph in his guilt.
Ros. His triumph shall be short.
Alb. What is't I hear?
Ros. My suff'rings, daughter, are beyond endurance.
I can no longer hide the anguish, shame,
And keen remorse I feel. Wild terrors seize
My soul! phantoms haunt my restless pillow!
Last night, at that dread hour when spirits flit
To rouse the fiends of conscience and despair,
And fearful darkness reigns, an ashy radiance
Illum'd my chamber, and a spirit mov'd
With slow majestic step, a dagger in
His hand, toward me: 'twas——
Alb. My father? Yes
'Twas he! Ah, show'd he not his streaming wounds?
Oft has he thus to me appear'd, in holy dreams!
Ros. Frantic with terror, I sought refuge in
His murd'rer's arms: the spirit bad me look:
I rais'd my head and saw—Oh god!—blood stream
Afresh from his unnumber'd wounds!
Alb. Oh piteous sight!
Ros. A groan sepulch'ral issu'd from his breast;
Tears fill'd his stony eye; my father's skull,
In which with savage cruelty he'd forc'd
Me at a public festival to drink,
Receiv'd the streaming blood: he bad me with
The horrid bev'rage quench my thirst! My soul
Appal'd, I drew my hand away: oh, what
A fearful rage blaz'd in his eye! Drink! drink,
He cried, and threat'ning aim'd the dagger at
My heart! I started!—Ah! I felt the chill
Of death! (*pointing to her heart*) I feel it here!—The spirit vanish'd,
Fell darkness clos'd my eyes, I lay intranc'd
Till morning, circled by phantoms black
And pitiless, 'gainst whom I vainly strove.
I seem t' have risen from the grave: exhausted
Nature is overcome: existence is
A burden!
Alb. Horrible! What tortures now
O'ertake, what future pangs await thee! Pity
Teaches me thou'rt still my mother! Then, since
Thou feel'st remorse, oh, plunge not deeper still
In guilt! Wreak veng'ance on thy base seducer!
And, if thou need'st my aid, this arm, inspir'd
By honor and revenge, shall do thee right!
Tears are a poor atonement: blood! ay, blood,
Must flow t' appease my noble father's shade!

Ros. Thou speak'st my wish: thy zeal is just. Oh, how
It shames me! Comfortless, I'll weep no more
Thy hapless fate, beloved Alboin!
Soon to thy manes shall the murderer
Be sacrific'd. 'Twas Heav'n inspir'd the thought.
Ah, could my blood, mingled with that of my
Seducer, but atone for the black crime!—
But Heav'n rejects not the repentant heart.
Alb. Oh, do but this, and I again shall find
A mother! thou shalt see me, prostrate at
Thy feet, deplore th' intemp'rate passion I
Betray'd: yet——
Ros. 'Tis resolv'd the coming hour
False Helmige bleeds: thou'lt be the priestess of
This sacrifice: my arm is weak.
Alb. 'Tis true
I ne'er have grasp'd fell murd'rous weapon; but
My injur'd father's spirit will ensanguinate
This arm, if thine should fail t' inflict the death
On cruel Helmige, which he gave my sire.
But how and where? Speak!
Ros. Soon will he return
From taking his accustom'd bath, unarm'd.
A cordial is prepar'd. No more.
Alb. Think'st thou
He'll take a cordial from my hand?
Ros. No: I
Will offer it: but, should the poison fail,
Or work too slow, thy dagger shall expel
His guilty soul to realms of endless death.
Though late, how exquisite is veng'ance! Thou,
Albissvintha, wilt not be inactive!
Alb. Alas, my heart, too tender, shrinks appal'd
From deeds of blood: yet retribution and
A noble father's wrongs inflame me, with
A gen'rous zeal, to punish the assassin.
Ros. Persevere: a recompence awaits thee—
Longinus——
Alb. Ah, why name him? Hast thou not
With threats commanded me to fly him? Why then——
Ros. But execute th' intent, the mystery
Shall be unravell'd: but, till he, Helmige, be first
Dispatch'd, thou must not think of love. He rests
His hopes of safety on thy union with
The prince, to whom he has propos'd thy hand:
Thence rose the prohibition I enforc'd.
Alb. Why wert thou silent? Think'st thou I'd receive
A bridegroom from his hand? No——

Ros. (*perceiving* Longinus) Ha! Longinus comes:
I'll leave thee to prepare the instruments
Of veng'ance. Remember my command—Yet,
It is superfluous: no more he'll speak
To thee of love.

SCENE III.

Enter LONGINUS. ROSAMOND *leads* LONGINUS *to the Side Scene, and says:*

Ros. Betray not our desires
To Albissvintha! We must warily
Proceed, till fearless we may boast our flame.
Soon shall my revengeful arm free thee from
Th' invidious spy, who is a check upon
Our transports——(*going.*)
Long. Ha! One word——
Ros. (*at the door*) A thousand, prince,
When I return.
Long. Queen, stay, I must explain. [*Exit* Rosamond.

SCENE IV.

Long. She will not hear me!—Albissvintha! Oh,
Angel as thou art, thou'rt the daughter of
A fiend!
Alb. Respect her, prince! Know'st thou for what
She goes?
Long. Ah, should I not prevent her fell
Design? Is not my promise pledg'd? Too much
I know!
Alb. Go, then, offer thy breast to shield
Th' assassin! Turn thy sword upon th' avenger of
My sire! Yet, know, the enemy thou hast
T' oppose is Albissvintha.
Long. Thou wouldst——
Alb. Yes!
I will chastise a crime abhorr'd of Heav'n,
Avenge my father's shade: this hand which never yet
Was stain'd with blood, this hand shall deal the blow!
With eye of adamant I'll view the stream!
Thou haply never knew'st thy parents, prince;
Or dost not recollect; or didst not learn
The dreadful difference between their loss
By gentle, slow and natural decay,
And by th' accurst, insidious dagger's point.
How galling 'tis to see the murderer
Receive support from those we love; in guilt
Triumphant! Is the soul savage that breathes
Revenge?

Long. Who could unmov'd hear virtue plead
Against exulting vice were a barbarian!
My soul recoils against th' assassin! Yes,
Thy grief afflicts my heart! Thy father was
A hero: fame his victories records.
Noble he was, and gen'rous and sincere:
He liv'd the honored idol of his people.
Alb. Yet, knowing this, thou scruplest to avenge
A monarch thus reverenc'd, thus belov'd!
I'll speak no more of thy forbearance, prince:
'Tis noble, tho' ill judg'd: but, strange to say,
Thou wouldst prevent my just revenge: what reason
Canst thou allege?
Long. Thy safety. He, Helmige,
Is not to fall the last great victim of
Her rage: think, who gave the dagger! Who guided
The arm that struck thy father to the heart!
Alb. She was seduc'd.
Long. The pure and noble mind,
Affectionate as chaste, cannot believe
A mother's turpitude——Yet had she not
First told her lawless love would this Helmige
Have dar'd t' aspire so high?
Alb. Oh, leave me in
An error! It is genial to my hopes!
How eagerly I even grasp at shadows
To palliate her guilt. Let this suffice!
She now repents! She will avenge my wrongs,
And will sufficiently be punish'd in
The death of her detested minion; I
No longer shall be tortur'd with the presence of
My father's murderer, whose sight to me
Is death. I——
Long. From his loath'd presence, 'tis true,
Thou wilt be freed: but who remains? A mother,
Who, by a second murder, but betrays
A second lord, once more to pave the way
To treachery and death: who, reckless of
Thy anguish, dead to shame, would rob thee of
A heart, which pants for thee alone; and, should
That heart reject her lawless love, no doubt
Would quench her impious flame in blood: who would
Destroy thee as the obstacle to her
Desires! Adultery and murder are——
Alb. Alas, what say'st thou? No, I saw the burning tears
Of penitence bedew her cheek: witness'd
The writhing tortures of upbraiding conscience,
The terrors which unholy phantoms rais'd,
The horror——

Long. Ah! Thou'rt shamefully abus'd!
Alb. How? Was't a snare? Impossible!
Long. A heart
Like thine can ill conceive the hell-born wiles
Of vice. Oh, Albissvintha, shudder while
Thou hear'st! Thy mother loves or rather courts
Me with unblushing ardor, therefore craves
Her minion's blood! 'tis that which——
Alb. Thee? Oh, no!
The crime's too black! She may—but, no, I have
Her promise that, Helmige no more, I shall,
My noble friend, be thine.
Long. Then why forbid
Thy vows?
Alb. That he, Helmige, might not escape
Our vengeance; seeking, by the offer of
My hand, to win thy friendship.
Long. Hence arise
My fears 'Twas my rejection of thy hand
Which thou bad'st me refuse that emboldened her
T' avow her odious passion, and tempt me
To be th' accomplice of her treachery.
She thought, since I gaz'd heedless on thy charms,
Her person and her treasures must inflame
My heart: unblushingly she spoke her hopes:
Surprise and consternation robb'd me of
The pow'r to undeceive her: she mistook
My silence for a mute acknowledgment
Of love. Rous'd from the stupor of amaze
I vainly sought t' explain; eager she went,
Borne by th' intoxication of delight,
Deaf t' entreaty. Thou saw'st she beckon'd me
Aside. And heard'st thou not that I conjur'd
Her, going, to return in vain?
Alb. Doubt, grief,
And fear, at once o'erwhelm me! How? A queen
So lost to shame? My mother? No! Thou err'st,
Longinus.
Long. Would 'twere a mistake! But has
She not before swerv'd from high virtue's path?
A crown's no amulet 'gainst vice: alike
The pauper and the prince can err. In monarchs,
Guilt is a wide extending pestilence.
If to Helmige Alboin was sacrific'd,
Helmige for Longinus must now make way;
Were't but t' attain the power I possess.
Men must be judg'd according to their actions.
Alb. Alas, thou pourest venom on my wounds!
Scarce is the healing bandage laid when thou
Unkindly tear'st it off!

Long. Thy safety 'mpels me
To take the only method that remains:
Haply, we may turn this odious treachery
To honor, and our advantage.
Alb. Oh, say!
What can be done?
Long. Restrain thy gen'rous ire.
Heav'n is just; thy wrongs are felt; and, if
The sword of retribution be a while
Withheld, 'twill strike with tenfold majesty.
Alb. Restrain my ire? And shall the traitor——
Long. Yes.
When Rosamond extends the murd'rous hand,
Bid her forbear.
Alb. Too much, Longinus, thou
Demand'st.
Long. Oh, no! I but would save thee from
Th' insidious snares, which ruthless murder spreads.
Say, when off'ring th' ensanguin'd hand, which I
With detestation shall reject, think'st thou
She'll spare me? Or, shall I reward her crimes,
And lead her to the altar, when my heart
Alone exists for thee?—No! Sooner I'd
Be thought unworthy, princess, of thy love.
Alb. I can't refuse a first request of thine.
To satisfy thee, I'll delay, but not
Renounce, vengeance. Great is the sacrifice.
Had any, save thyself, demanded it,
He would have been repuls'd with angry scorn:
But 'tis thy wish, and I'll dissuade the queen.
Yet, I cannot——
Long. Too soon, perhaps, insidious vice,
Unblushing, will cast off disguise: if so,
Fly, I conjure thee, to these arms, where innocence
And love will guard thy days from danger. Heav'n
Will guide thy steps.
Alb. I'll seek the queen! How hard
The task t' allay the ardor of revenge!
Let me not, just Heaven, long have to combat
With monsters! Thee, Longinus; it behoves
To keep thy promise; but 'tis not my duty
To patiently endure a father's murder. [*Exit* Albissvintha.

SCENE V.

Long. (*alone*) Should she not divert the queen from her fell
Purpose, force must prevent the crime. A prince,
Within his own domain, has sov'reign right.
Justly I may confine this impious queen,
Or banish her from these abodes: but will

She not demand her daughter? And can I
Refuse? Angelic maid! Thy happiness
Shall be the pilot of my course. Unblest
Are those, who, guiltless, but associate
With vice. How blest the mansion where sweet peace,
Sincerity, and noble freedom dwell!
Mine was their sanctu'ry, till Ros'mond came,
And with her brought foul murder, treachery,
And fraud! Oh, may the hell-born demons fix
Not here their dark abode. [*Exit* Longinus.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

ROSAMOND, ALBISSVINTHA: ROSAMOND *holds in one Hand a Dagger, and in the other a Bowl of Poison.*

Rosamond.

LOOK, my daughter, look and triumph! We haste
To vengeance doubly arm'd with death! Yes, death,
Imagin'd by Omnipotence t' exalt
And liberate the human race! Ah, what
Were man depriv'd of that? A slave who feels
The weight of chains without the pow'r to break them.
Go, trample on th' assassin's abject neck,
And, if he call for mercy, answer him
With curses! Oft I smile at manly cowardice!
Insects! Vile reptiles! Few can feel their pow'r;
They crawl contentedly, and lick the dust,
And live because their insignificancy
Guards them: in life or death alike o'er look'd
Alb. How? Can fell deeds of blood yield such delight?
If so, the fate of man is horrible!
I'd languish rather in obscurity
Than steep my hands in blood.
Ros. His death our safety must
Secure: the beast of prey, if spar'd, turns on
His saviour. Ay! Were not Helmige a coward,
We long ere this had bled: servile of soul,
Obedience is his pride. I bad him strike,
And trembling he obey'd: he basely shrinks
From death; and soon we shall behold him yield
His dastard spirit bleeding at our feet.

Alb. Oh, horrible! 'Twas then by thy command
Helmige slew his sov'reign? 'Twas not his wish?
Ros. Come! Thine shall be the glory to avenge
Thy father's murder. Here! (*offering a dagger.*)
Alb. (*refusing it*) Forgive me, but
My tender heart shrinks from the cruel task:
This dagger wakes the pity of my sex.
[*After a short pause, still refusing the dagger which the queen offers her.*
Impossible! My trembling hand starts at
The touch. My tearful eye aghast turns from
Th' ensanguin'd scene! Oh god! the murd'rous steel
Pierc'd my lov'd father's heart!——
Ros. No more; his blood
Shall sate thy vengeance, and atone for my
Offence. Thou need'st not strike, unless the poison work
Too slow. Conceal thyself, and take the dagger.
Alb. Let my entreaties move thee, queen, to spare
His life: the poison offer not.
Ros. What is't
I hear?—Why this reluctance?
Alb. Think, oh queen,
A second time thou'lt shed a husband's blood!
Commit a second crime! If base Helmige
Slew Alboin, 'twas at thy request; and tho'
That I and all the world with justice might
Demand atonement for the deed, thou shouldst
Defend him, since thy hand and treasures were
Thy free donation: nay, thy life and mine
Thou scrupled'st not t' intrust——
Ros. Amazement!—Ha!
Foul treason lurks beneath!—What means this sudden change?
When penitent, anon, I breath'd but of
Revenge, thou blew'st the spark into a flame:
I come now arm'd to sate thy vengeance, and
Thou turn'st, at once, from wrath implacable,
To moderation and compassion? Thou
Wilt not let death o'ertake the murd'rer of
Thy sire? Haply thou think'st Helmige the peer of
Ros'mond! Wretch, dost thou conspire with demons to
Betray me! Speak!
Alb. What must I not infer,
Queen, from thy wrath? That I myself may bleed,
With thy accomplice? When till now didst thou
Disdain his hand and heart? Didst thou not urge
Longinus to receive him? Will he not
Expel us from the palace, if we dare
Ourselves infringe the law we gave? And, should

He think a daughter's vengeance just, yet must
Not he avenge the murder of his guest?
Ros. Is't so! The cloud is burst, and vivid flames
Of jealousy and love evaporate!
Alb. Canst thou condemn that love whose sanction fed
Affection?
Ros. Trait'ress! take the dagger, or
Thou di'st!
[*She advances with the dagger furiously toward* Albissvintha, *who struck with horror flies.*
Alb. Help! Help! Oh, save me! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Ros. Go! viper!
Soon shalt thou call to Heav'n itself in vain:
Nor man nor God can save thee! Jealousy
Has taught her caution. Traiteress, thou soon
Shalt be dispatch'd. Longinus weakly hath
Let her perceive th' aversion which he bears her.
Oh love, such are thy miracles! Anon
She panted to revenge her father's death:
She now implores me to forbear! Reproves,
And haply will inform the prince: so be't.
Like other princes, he'll assume the tone
Of lofty sentiment; yet, if success
Attend the mortal act, he'll smile and doom
It t' oblivion: whene'er our int'rest can
Be serv'd, we mock at all the busy world
May prattle. Alboin, thy murd'rer's blood
Shall reconcile thy wrathful spirit, and
The worms that gnaw thy bones, shall feast upon
His corse. But, hark: I hear Helmige in his
Apartment. (*looking*) Yes, 'tis he; come from the bath.
He'll soon be here! Infernal deities
Aid me! With zeal I burn to send fresh victims to
Your dark abodes——He comes——
[*She places the poisoned bowl on a little table, keeping the dagger, and runs to embrace him.*

SCENE III.—*Enter* Helmige.

Ros. Thus let me clasp
The lord of my affections!
Hel. (*perceiving the dagger*) Ha! What is't
I see? A dagger?—Thou! Methought I heard
A shriek: 'twas Albissvintha's voice?
Ros. The trait'ress!
Thy life, oh God, thy life was sought by her.
I found her here conceal'd: thy bosom bare——

Hel. What say'st thou ?

Ros. (*showing the dagger*) Yes! Behold the murd'rous weapon!
'Twas her intent to plunge it in thy heart,
Supposing thou wouldst come exhausted from
The bath : in yonder chamber, raging, she broke
In foul invectives 'gainst us both, arraign'd
Eternal justice, and exclaim'd—' If Heav'n
Will not avenge my wrongs, this arm shall do
Me right !' then, mutt'ring curses, low and bitter,
A dozen times she made toward the door.
At length she hither came : I follow'd unperceiv'd
The strength'ning cordial in my hand,
And watch'd her glide behind the colonnade,
Arm'd with this dagger : slowly I approach'd,
Then, springing suddenly upon her, seiz'd
Her by the arm. Why art thou here, a dagger in
Thy hand, cried I ? 'Tis for thy minion, she
Unblushing answer'd—The weapon I snatch'd.—
T' avenge my father and chastize thy guilt,
The parricide continued. Much incens'd,
My arm was rais'd to strike ; but she escap'd
The death her crime deserv'd, and shrieking fled.
[Rosamond *conceals the dagger in her bosom.*

Hel. My better angel ! Let this warm embrace,
These rapt'rous glances, speak the fervor of
My gratitude and love. Thou see'st, my queen,
The horrid perils that each hour threaten our
Destruction : thou hast snatch'd the dagger from
The princess, but has death no other instrument ?

Ros. The wise anticipate : have we no daggers ?
What, shall the fury, who with daily threats
And maledictions rings the damning cry
Of murder and eternal torments in
Our ear, to frighten dastard cowardice,
Escape my vengeance ? No ! The grave that holds
Her father, gapes to receive her : there shall
She silence learn, and in the mould'ring dust
Bow her proud neck.

Hel. Filial affection, queen,
And love, inflame her thus ; we must forgive
Th' offence.

Ros. Forgive ? No ! I must love thee less
If earth or heav'n protect her from my rage !
Think'st thou her vengeful hate will ever cool ?
No, she'll——

Hel. Send her away, or let us fly.

Ros. Fly ?—Yes ! Flight is now our sole resource.

Hel. Ha ! Hast thou spoken with the prince ? Has he
Avow'd his love ; or have his looks betray'd
His heart ?

Ros. He loves me: true it is, he spoke
Not of his passion: but how can th' enamour'd soul
Suppress its over-powering emotions?
Hel. He loves thee? Is not then my death decreed?
Ros. Let him but speak another word, he dies!
Hel. What said the prince?
Ros. He urg'd me to remain;
But I insisted on departing, which
Afflicted him: thou must amuse him with
False hopes, while I seek out a safe retreat,
And gradually convey our stores from hence,
Till fortune favor our escape.
Hel. Oh, Rosamond!
My queen, my all! I were a wretch
Without thee! Come! The cordial!
Ros. (*presenting the poison*) 'Twas almost
Forgot: too long thou hast delay'd: why still
In armour?
Hel. Dangers ev'ry step await us,
'Tis prudent to be thus upon my guard.
Ros. Thy fears, Helmige, are a too treach'rous guard:
[*Looking fixedly at him as he puts the bowl to his lips.*
They never yet have conquer'd destiny.
Hel. (*having drunk*) How bitter is the draught—I never drank
The like.
Ros. 'Tis what thy sure physician has
Prepar'd.
Hel. How's this! Hell burns within my veins!
Oh, agony!
Ros. Strong bitters oft have most
Of searching efficacy.
Hel. Torture! Oh!
Ros. Be calm; thou'lt soon be free from pain.
Hel. From pain?
What treason is on foot! Is't so! E'en so!
Thus suddenly! My eyes grow heavy. [*Regards her steadfastly.*
Take the bowl!——Guilty wretch!
(*Looks into the bowl*) Come! Drink the rest!——
I've left enough——
Ros. I drink? And why?
Hel. (*seizes her arm*) Pledge me!
Canst thou refuse?
Ros. I will not drink.
Hel. (*his dagger at her breast*) Trait'ress,
Thou shalt! Drink!
Ros. How? Dost thou suspect——
Hel. 'Tis poison!
Ruthless woman, with me thou didst achieve

The bloody deed; with me the punishment
Thou shalt partake. Drink, or— (*offering to stab her.*)
Ros. Die by thy hand?
Kill'd by so mean a wretch! (*drinks.*)
Hel. That wretch thou once
Esteemedst worthy of thy hand.
Ros. Because
I chose the basest to accomplish my
Revenge.
Hel. And who seduc'd me first from virtue?
Ros. Silence, traitor. Oh, misery! must I
Be tied to thee in death? Tenfold I feel
The horror of my fate!
Hel. Accursed woman!——
Rise, fiends of conscience, and inflict on her
The tortures, which more than the pangs of death
Convulse my soul. Ha! Thus he writh'd and fought
'Gainst death, when I, seduc'd, vile woman, by
Thy arts, more fatal than the poison which
Consumes me, plung'd th' assasinating steel
To Alboin's heart: no saviour nigh, or friend,
To pay the last sad duties of affection.
Now, friendless and unpitied, I expire:
Yet he——Furies, avaunt!

[*He sinks on a chair;* Rosamond *walks to and fro with rage, and after a pause speaks.*

Ros. And must I die
Thy victim?—With a Helmige? Fiends! Is there
No way to realms of night and hell without him?
I feel the leaden hand of death—Oh, fearful mist!
The tempest howls! the heavens flash their fire!
Chaos with threatening eye beckons me to him:
Ha! What is that? The raven, ominous,
And vulture arm'd with death, fasten on my heart!
They suck my blood! Oh, save me! Help! Helmige!
Alboin! Longinus! Help! Help!—

[*She sinks in a swoon at the feet of* Helmige.

SCENE *The Last.*

Enter Albissvintha *and* Longinus.

Long. (*as he enters, to* Albissvintha, *who follows him timidly*)
In vain
She may solicit further aid: should Helmige still
Be living, I'll command her instantly
With him to leave Ravenna, or——Oh God!
What is't I see!
Alb. My mother! At the feet
Of an assassin!——Heav'ns!

Long. Here lies the bowl!
'Tis empty.
Hel. (*looking at* Longinus) Prince—you—see—th' atonement of
Our crimes—Approach—Load me with curses; I
Deserve them all—but she is still more guilty—
Some reparation I have made—She'll follow me—
Had she surviv'd; you all, in turn, had bled—
How fortunate for thee—Longinus—thou
Lovedst her!——
Long. Unhappy man, I love Rosamond?
No! (Rosamond *opens her eyes and looks fixedly on* Longinus.)
Alb. Still she breathes! Oh, call for help.
[Longinus *hurries away.*
Ros. Where am I!
Oh horror! Prostrate at his feet!—Away!—
Oh, how the traitor will exult! Away.
[Albissvintha *assists her to a chair.*
Is't thou, daughter?
Alb. Alas, my mother! Yes!
'Tis thy afflicted child, who from her soul
Forgives thee!—Oh, may the Almighty Judge
Be merciful to thy offences! Ah, (*pointing to* Helmige)
Wouldst thou—— [Longinus *returns.*
Ros. Plead not for him—I heard Longinus——
Long. (*approaching*) Oh act of phrenzy! Queen, what hast thou done?
Ros. Thou lov'dst me?
Long. Lov'd thee? No: thy wishes, queen,
Deceiv'd thee: 'tis thy daughter I adore,
And she alone——
Ros. Oh, treachery! False wretch,
Was not one hell enough?
Hel. Ha! Triumphant
E'en in death! [*He expires.*
Alb. Oh, behold these tears; forgive,
Be reconcil'd, and die in peace!
Ros. Avaunt!
Trait'ress, avaunt! (*pause*) Yet, no—approach—Yes, I
Forgive—thee—Come—one last embrace.
[*She draws the dagger unperceived, and strikes* Albissvintha *while she embraces her.* Longinus *receives the falling Princess in his arms.*
Long. Oh God!
Ros. Shouldst thou alone be happy? No: to hell
With us, fond wretch, thou'lt go! The furies wait——
Long. Oh, wretch! My Albissvintha!
Alb. Calm thy fears:
The wound is slight: but, ah, more deep than daggers

Her suff'rings wound. I feel she's still my mother.
Oh that my pray'rs might mitigate her pangs.
Dear mother, let me once again approach!
Let me perform the last sad rites.
[*She goes toward the Queen, but is withheld by* Longinus.
Long. Forbear:
If daggers fail, her eyes, like basilisks,
Will kill. Oh, bless'd escape!
Alb. Grief, pity, fear,
And horror rend——
Long. Be calm.
Ros. My treasures all
Enjoyed by thee? 'Tis the last thunderbolt!
It strikes——no more. [*Dies.*
Alb. She dies! She dies! Oh, God!
Long. Wretched woman! E'en amid the horrors of
A guilty conscience, in the agonies of death,
She sought to blast the happiness of others.
These dreadful consequences, these, and, oh,
How many more, are thine—illicit love!

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

REMARKS.

The subject of this tragedy is historical. The character of Rosamond, by its consummate wickedness, excites horror, perhaps too great for representation; but the language is truly impassioned; suspense is excited and maintained, and the incidents that conduce to the catastrophe are artfully conceived and managed. It will surely give pleasure, to English readers, to have before them such examples of fine writing as this tragedy affords, and be thus enabled to do justice to, and to honor the genius of the author; whose name before, perhaps, they had never heard. It may be doubted whether *Weisse* does not dispute the palm of excellence with *Lessing*. The above tragedy in the original is written in Alexandrines, on the French model of heroic verse, that is alternately single and double rhymes: but the German language has a power of rhythmus much greater than that of the French. *Weisse* has profited by an old French tragedy, entitled *Alboin, ou la Vengeance trahie*, performed in 1608, the author of which was named *Nicolas Chretien*.

DRAMATIC BIOGRAPHY.

ANECDOTES OF THE LIFE OF SAMUEL FOOTE.

(*Continued from Vol. II. No. XI. p.* 342.)

IN 1763, he brought out The Mayor of Garrat, at the Haymarket theatre, in which he boldly ridiculed shop-keeping officers, ignorant magistrates, and even a great minister of state.

In this piece, the part of Jerry Sneak was written purposely for Weston, whose abilities were well understood by Foote; and it was this character that first brought Weston into universal notice.

His next production was The Patron, brought out in 1764; and in the following season The Commissary appeared. The Patron he considered as one of his best pieces; but The Commissary was far more popular.

Soon after this, a misfortune happened to him of a severe nature; and it was occasioned by one of those immoral attempts at jocularity, which have been frequently attended with pernicious consequences. Early in the year 1766, being on a visit to Lord Mexborough, accompanied by his Royal Highness the Duke of York, and other men of rank and fashion, by playing upon his vanity, his companions induced him to mount a high-spirited hunter, belonging to the duke, from the back of which he was thrown with such violence as to fracture his leg in two places. His irritability was feared; he submitted, however, to amputation with fortitude and good humour, turned his jokes upon himself, asserted he had no fears now of corns, sores, or kibed heels, that he would not exchange his one good leg for Lord Spindle's two drum-sticks, and, though he might find himself awkward at running, he would soon hop with any man in England.

On this occasion, the Duke of York was peculiarly kind to him, and did him an essential service, by procuring for him a royal patent to erect a theatre in the city and liberties of Westminster, for the performance of dramatic pieces, annually, from the fourteenth of May to the fourteenth of September. Accordingly, he pulled down the old Little Theatre, in the

Haymarket, and erected the present; which he opened in May. 1767, with a prelude.

In the month of July, he brought out The Tailors, a piece not written by himself, and occasioned by the disputes then existing between the masters and journeymen, who have lately shown themselves so angry, as indeed they had done several times before, when it was performed. As a piece, it has little merit, and they were to blame not to laugh instead of take offence.

In 1768, he produced his very popular comedy of The Devil upon Two Sticks, which brought him great sums both in London and Dublin.

His pleasant contest with Garrick, and the sarcasms he uttered on the subject of the Jubilee, the ridicule with which he threatened him, the reconciliation produced between them by the Marquis of Stafford, the behaviour of Garrick in tattling to his friends that he had lent Foote five hundred pounds, which was the great occasion of Foote's resentment, the immediate repayment of the money, and other circumstances relating to this affair, concur to prove that, though Foote was irrascible, he had a liberal and generous spirit.

In 1770, he produced The Lame Lover; and, in the following season, The Maid of Bath, the heroine of which was the young lady who afterward became so celebrated, first as Miss Linley, the finest singer of her time, and next as the wife of Mr. Sheridan.

In the winter, he was encouraged to make an excursion to Edinburgh, and informed Mr. Wilkinson of this in the following letter, which is here inserted, both as a specimen of his humorous style, and containing theatrical anecdote:

To TATE WILKINSON, Esq.

Dear Sir,

I am much obliged to you for the offer of your assistance in the town of Newcastle, but the newspapers have laid out a plan for me that never occurred to myself.

I hope the northern crown sits lightly on your brow; and that your immediate subjects are not only dutiful, and observant, but that your whole

wide-extended empire pay their taxes largely and cheerfully. I have this summer entertained the veteran Sheridan, who is dwindled into a mere Cock-and-Bottle Chelsea pensioner. He has enlisted some new recruits unfit for service, and such as might be expected to issue from his discipline.

I should be glad to chop in upon you, in my way to Edinburgh; for which place I shall set out about the middle of October. Ross is with me, ill and indolent; but however, thanks to my own industry, the campaign has been happy enough.

Believe me most sincerely yours,

North-end, Aug. 16, 1770. SAM. FOOTE.

In 1772, he brought out The Nabob; which subject was suggested to him by the ridiculous pomp observable in persons who return rich from the East Indies. The character of Sir Matthew Mite, in this comedy, was supposed to be personal; and two gentlemen, as they imagined themselves, who had been high in office in the East Indies, furnished themselves with cudgels, resolved to chastise him in his own house, sent up their names, and were received by Foote, in his drawing-room, with that politenes and urbanity which he so perfectly understood.

The effect on them was such that, instead of instant violence, they began with remonstrance. He divined their purpose, redoubled his politeness, and invited them to take coffee, previous to entering on their complaint. They refused: "their business must first be settled." Foote, however, so well understood the human heart, and the manner of placing truth and common sense in a conspicuous point of view, that, though they were first choleric, irrational, and bent upon outrage, he displayed himself to them with so much reason, such perfect good humor, such brilliancy of wit, and so many charms of conversation, that they agreed next day to dine with him, and could speak of nothing afterward but of his extraordinary powers of mind, politeness, and hospitality, and how narrowly they had escaped a quarrel, and a lawsuit, with such an unoffending pleasant gentleman.

The next year, he brought out two new pieces: Piety in Pattens, and The Bankrupt. The first was in ridicule of sentimental comedy; and the latter a satire on fraudulent

bankruptcies. This however he very generously altered, to what it is at present; it being represented to him that Mr. Fordyce, a man of great worth but unfortunate, would be suspected as the person satirized. Whatever his enemies may have said to the contrary, Foote was a man of an excellent heart.

He was remarkably fond of the Irish nation, and they of him; and in the winter he again visited Dublin, where he gave great pleasure, and was greatly pleased.

Early in the season of 1774, he brought out The Cozeners, at the Haymarket, which he sent to Garrick, for his perusal, who was so flattered, by this mark of kindness, that he wrote the prologue, which was spoken by Foote himself.

Hitherto, his life had been almost a continuation of conviviality, pleasantry, and agreeable events; but its close may be said to be melancholy. The eccentric conduct of the Duchess of Kingston was at that time the general topic, and he then wrote a comedy, entitled A Trip to Calais, in which she was pictured, under the character of Lady Kitty Crocodile, as hypocritical, oppressive, and prolific in the vices of intrigue.

But the consequences of this satire were to him so serious, and incidents so numerous, so intricate, and of such importance to the peace of society arose, that they deserve a much more circumstantial detail than can be given them in this work; and the account that can here be admitted, though not so ample as the nature of the subject would justify, or rather demand, must be deferred to the next number.

(*To be continued.*)

NEW PIECES, AND NEW PERFORMERS.

ON Tuesday, October 29th, a comedy was performed, for the first time, at the Theatre Royal Drury-lane, entitled A Prior Claim. It is the joint production of Mr. Pye, the Poet Laureat, and Mr. Arnold, son of the late musical Doctor Arnold: it was

favorably received, but wanting attraction, appears to have been laid aside, after the ninth night.

The story may be briefly told: a young couple are preparing to solemnize their nuptials, with the consent of a generous and benevolent father: the intended bridegroom is an officer, of honor and virtue, but with a not easily accounted-for propensity to despondency, from a fear that something will happen to cross his hopes, though it is his wedding-day.

This strange foreboding is as strangely verified: the bride had been promised in marriage by her father, while very young, but with her own consent, to another officer, who, having gone to serve in the East Indies, fell in battle, and was returned on the list among the slain. It happened that he was only wounded, was taken by the enemy, remained in captivity some few years, at length made his escape, and he now arrives just in time to assert his prior claim.

The contention of the passions of father, daughter, bridegroom, and claimant, forms the interest of the piece. Either, however, the subject does not in itself, or did not to the authors, suggest a sufficient variety of incidents to interest the feelings, and keep the attention alive: they flagged continually, and the piece, though patiently heard, and loudly approved in the last scene, which was written with great effect, was not calculated to attract that concourse of spectators, which establishments so large as our modern theatres require. At our present theatrical banquets, the guests seem to demand much forced meat, and highly seasoned, such as frequently cloys the appetite of the judicious, and sickens in the general digestion.

A clown, a countrywoman, and an Irish servant, were introduced, to give comic relief; but they did not produce sufficient effect.

The actors performed their several parts with great ability. Mr. Elliston personated the bridegroom; and the honorable and just resolution he takes, at last, rather to submit to unhappiness himself than to inflict it on those he most loves, was delivered by Mr. Elliston with great force and feeling.

Mr. Dowton gave an excellent picture of a liberal-minded free-hearted old gentleman.

Mr. Barrymore asserted his claims with energy.

Mr. Johnston failed not, for he never fails, to be the humorous representative of an Irishman.

Mr. Collins gave a natural and laughable portrait of an honest rustic.

Miss De Camp infused archness and good humor, mixed with simplicity, into her part.

Miss Duncan, the happy bride, for the lovers are happy at last and the prior claim is renounced, delighted the audience by her excellence: her song in particular she gave with great effect.

Mr. Dormer had to personate an old Scotchman: he speaks articulately, is well heard, and therefore gives a degree of satisfaction; but his manner at present is hard.

The episode of the piece lay between the brother of the bride, personated by Mr. De Camp, and her protected humble friend, with whom this brother was in love. He first attempts seduction, for which she reproves and scorns him; then changes his sentiments, and is at last of course made happy, as well as his virtuous mistress, who suddenly is discovered to be a great heiress.

This part was allotted to Mrs. H. Siddons, whose acting seldom fails to delight the audience, and who on this occasion obtained her due share of applause; as also did Mr. De Camp.

He had a friend, or rather a fashionable acquaintance, a Bond-street lounger and fop of the present day. The situations and sentiments allotted to him, by the authors, were some of them rather aukward, and not sufficiently either pleasant or consistent with regard to moral propriety: though in the latter respect they may be tolerably accurate, or indeed far under the reality: but the public are becoming scrupulous with respect to stage exhibition: and in this they are wise.

Mr. Palmer gave a good and true picture of this absurd personage, which he had to represent.

At the same theatre, November 18, was produced an afterpiece entitled The Weather Cock, of which the following account was next day given in the Morning Chronicle:

"The whole piece rests upon one character. This is the most versatile, half-witted, shatter-brained, mad young fellow that

was ever seen out of a strait waistcoat. We hear of various professions and pursuits he had followed before the commencement of the action, and in the course of it he turns lawyer, player, soldier, gardener, quaker, &c. The supporter of this extravagant part was Mr. Bannister, who did every thing to render it entertaining. In addressing a jury and mimicking the eloquence of Westminster-hall he was peculiarly happy, and excited a loud laugh at the expence of the gentlemen of the long robe. On other occasions he did not succeed so well. The author made him appear under the influence of insanity, instead of affording him an opportunity to ridicule the follies and absurdities of mankind. Love has at length the effect of sobering our hero. He receives the hand of a lady who had captivated his heart under different disguises, and we are led to expect that he will become a steady, constant, and obedient husband. Miss De Camp displayed much address in bringing about this reformation. Cherry had to personate a common-place, good natured old man, as the hero's father. A character, intended to be entirely new, was assigned to Mathews. His name was *Briefwit*, his profession a barrister. What the humor was supposed to consist in, we do not know. He expressed approbation by saying *good*, and disapprobation by saying *bad*. He looked always most uncommonly grave; but so, unfortunately, did the audience, as often as he spoke. How he might *move the Court*, it is impossible to say, but he is certainly unskilled to *move laughter*. The piece was upon the whole extremely well received by a crowded audience, and we doubt not will become very popular."

This account was written from the feelings of a first representation, which shows how liable a first night's audience are to receive feeble and false impressions; the farce is now allowed to possess great humor, and not only Mr. Bannister but Mr. Mathews produce almost incessant laughter.

At the Theatre Royal, Covent-garden, November 14, a new comedy was performed called The Delinquent, or Seeing Company.

It would be no easy task to remember and narrate all the particulars of all the plots which this piece contains; we must

therefore be satisfied with a sketch of those that are principal. Sir Arthur Courcy, Sir Edward Specious, Major Tornado, old and young Doric, Mrs. Aubrey, or Lady Courcy, Miss Stoic, and Olivia Courcy, are the chief persons of the drama.

Sir Arthur Courcy, a gentleman of great wealth and birth, owing to the extravagance of his wife, contracted debts that obliged him to fly his country. He is met in Italy in great distress by Sir Edward Specious, to whose father he was greatly indebted, but who takes him under his protection, with the proviso that Sir Arthur shall, on all occasions, be subservient to the will of Sir Edward, and the pander to the passions of this hypocrite.

That a man of high honor, and feelings so strong that they are supposed to convulse him, should submit to such a condition is a paradox. Sir Arthur tells us, it has happened because he wished once more to find his daughter. What his delinquency is, which so racks his bosom, does not very clearly appear: his daughter had been taken from him by his wife's father, Lord Danvers, who, dying in the East Indies, consigned her to Major Tornado. The Major becomes her protector; but his sister, Miss Stoic, fearful that she will rival her in the participation of the Major's wealth, trumps up strange tales against her, which the Major as strangely credits and does not credit, while Olivia is protected and not protected, distressed we know not why or how, and brought forward as the object for whom all our sensibilities are to be called into action.

By some good chance, so we are taught to think it, she falls in love with young Doric, the partner in trade of his uncle old Doric, an architect. This shatterbrain youth, though so adorable, strolling about the country in search of adventures and to escape duns, gives his last hundred pounds to an inn-keeper, to provide a supper and ball, to which he invites all the country, not one person in which he knows, and, among the rest, Sir Edward Specious, Sir Arthur, the Major, and of course Olivia.

Sir Arthur, who does not know his daughter, is compelled by Sir Edward to join in a plot to force her on board his yacht,

and carry her to a cave. Why to a cave? This nobody seems to know.

After many struggles of Sir Arthur, with himself and with Sir Edward, whether he shall or shall not comply and join him in an action which he justly pictures as atrocious, we find him at length in the cave with her, and afterward seeing her through a cottage window, till he at length discovers it is his daughter, in search of whom he had consented to become the degraded pernicious tool of Sir Edward Specious. He, after this, makes a new discovery: his wife, Lady Courcy, in the character of Aubrey, the governess of Olivia.

All this is but the mere outline, which is filled up with too great a variety of persons and things to admit of detail; but, notwithstanding the extravagance, there are, in many of the suppositions, some comic and many moral and feeling effects and sentiments, which result from them. These effects, comic and impassioned, when produced, are the chief beauties of a comedy. They are infinitely heightened, when resulting from a story told connectedly, and with probability; but that and these together form the perfection of writing.

The Delinquent justly ranks with the other productions of Mr. Reynolds, which are at least all of them of a pleasant cast: they shrink from critical examination, but they generally afford temporary amusement. Surely it must be a proof of ability, in an author who, for so long a series of years, has annually produced a comedy, which has been performed from fifteen to upward of twenty nights. Each of these comedies has been an epitome of annual follies and absurdities, which Mr. Reynolds has carefully and judiciously treasured up for public exhibition. His amiable and convivial character, as a man, has procured him a host of friends; and, though criticism continually darts her porcupine quills at him, it appears she is unable to give him a mortal wound. While he continues to point out the reigning follies and absurd whims of wealth and idlene s, and to interest us in the behalf of the social virtues, may her wounds never be more deep. He pretends not to erect his writings into a critical code; nor of that is there any danger: let them

therefore be pleasantly received, for the sake of the pleasantry and the good they contain.

In the performance of his pieces, Mr. Reynolds has generally been remarkably happy: the actors are all friendly to him, interested in his success, and exert themselves to the utmost.

If any one of them might be selected, as most admirable in this comedy, perhaps it was Mr. Kemble: the character was well suited to his talents, and he did it full justice. Yet Messrs. Lewis, Fawcett, Emery, and Munden, truly rank as his peers. Brunton and Liston both deserve commendation, though the latter had little to do.

The audience appeared to rejoice, when they once more beheld Mrs. H. Johnston. Her return to the theatre, and her late dangerous illness, created a great interest in her behalf, which she highly merits.

Mrs. Dibdin spoke articulately, and well; and Mrs. Gibbs felt the dignity, not only of a disguised lady, but, of virtue, mingled with the feelings of a mother, when she appeared as the governess and protector of Olivia.

Mr. Kemble deserves great praise for not bowing to the audience, when he was so loudly applauded at his entrance: he well knows that the character he assumes should be strictly preserved, and ought never to sink into or be confounded with that of the actor. In this respect, meritorious as she is, Mrs. H. Johnston was highly reprehensible. She may however, for this time, be excused, because of the circumstances above mentioned: her return to Covent-garden, and her recent illness.

Two new interludes have likewise appeared, one at each theatre, on the victory and death of Lord Nelson. They several nights continued to give pleasure, for they both appeal to feelings that are irresistible: the triumph and the gratitude of a nation. Wars, in themselves, are no less destructive than detestable: they must ever be lamented, and should ever be reprobated: but the subjugation of a tyrant, whose devastions afflict or rather torture mankind, is what every justly thinking man on earth must fervently desire.

A Mr. Miller, a new performer, appeared, for the first time, at Drury-lane, November 12, in The Siege of Belgrade. He was favourably received, though evidently timid; but the part allotted him was of little consequence. He has a good bass voice, but his musical abilities require great cultivation in order to give him stability and rank as a singer.

The same evening, November 12, Mr. Braham and Signora Storace made their first appearance, on the stage of Drury-lane, in this opera. That Signora Storace is an excellent performer has been long known to the town; and that Mr. Braham is a most finished and astonishing singer the united suffrages of the most intelligent judges, and even the severest critics, of his art allow. The summit of his excellence however is in songs of feeling, which admit properly neither of cadence nor divisions. The misfortune is that the public applaud most when they are most surprised, and not when they are most affected; at least, in the first instance, the applause reaches the actor's ear, and urges him again to court it by the same means.

Mademoiselle Parissot appeared, November 1, at Drury-lane, in a ballad called Terpsichore's Return. By the lovers of dancing her great talents are generally and highly admired; and they testified their delight at beholding their favourite.

On Saturday evening, November 23d, Miss Mudie, a child said to be seven years of age, and certainly not much more, made her appearance at the Theatre Royal, Covent-garden, in the part of Peggy, in the Country Girl. Concerning this child, such contradictory accounts had been received, by the Editor, that the utmost care was taken in The Theatrical Recorder to leave the minds of its readers without a bias on this subject. Whether children of this or a much larger growth are proper representatives of the heroes, or heroines, who have either governed the world, or have acted conspicuous parts in domestic life, is a question totally distinct from Miss Mudie. How it ever came to be a question is the thing that astonishes. With respect to the present child, her father, late an officer in his majesty's service, declares he has been induced to resign his commission, that he might devote himself entirely to cultivate the talents of his daughter: nay more, he further declares

that he has entered into a bond, with a learned and highly gifted tutor, to pay him two hundred a year, that he may also employ his whole time to produce the same effect.

The provincial papers, some of them, contained the most flattering accounts of the child's abilities; while others spoke of her with the utmost contempt.

On the night of trial at Covent-garden, appearances were at first all in her favor; but they were deceitful. It would be difficult to choose a part in which such a child could be supposed to act as a woman, with the most distant pretension to propriety, or probability. The comedy of The Country Wife, from which the modern piece is taken, was written in the licentious age of Charles II. by that very licentious though powerful writer Wycherly. A worse choice, for a child, could scarcely have been made: it shocked the feelings of every spectator, who had any proper feelings, to hear a child familiarly speaking of subjects which every woman ought to shut from her heart, and seeming familiar with ideas that should be carefully and in silence banished from the female mind, the moment of their birth. This was not the fault of Miss Mudie, for she could not understand the things of which she was conversing. Whatever the advocates for infantine and puerile actors may pretend, boys and girls can possibly have no more than a very imperfect knowledge of the human passions: a knowledge that can only be taught by and increases with maturity.

It was evident, from the temper of the audience, that many of them were convinced of this truth; and that others were strongly offended by the dialogue which the child had to deliver. Marks of great disapprobation began to appear in the second act; in the third they increased; and in the fourth control and opposition, by the friends of the child, were ineffectual.

In the midst of the tumult, the child herself, with the utmost assurance, came forward, and thus addressed the audience:

Ladies and Gentlemen—I have done nothing to offend the company sent here to hiss me, and I hope you'll turn 'em out.

It was not the child, however, with whom the audience were at war; and therefore, in *a child*, they passed over this strange impropriety with a loud laugh.

Though it was an exceedingly thin house, the storm was violent. Mr Kemble was repeatedly called for, and at length appeared. He is so deservedly esteemed, by the public, that he was much more patiently heard than could have been hoped: he pleaded that the reputation which Miss Mudie had acquired, in the country, had induced the proprietors of that theatre to engage her; for it was their duty, and their desire, to afford them every proper amusement. When this did not appear to satisfy, he further added, that the will of the audience should be obeyed: and he did but entreat they would be kind enough to suffer Miss Mudie to conclude the character.

He then retired, Miss Mudie appeared again, and, during two or three of her first speeches, there were hopes that she would have been heard through. However, the determination at once to end, if possible, all infantine imposition, had been made, and the command of Off, Off, Off, was again reiterated with no less force.

Mr. Murray then came forward, and informed the spectators that, if they would have the goodness to wait a few minutes, the character should be concluded by Miss Searle. After a very short interval, Miss Searle appeared; but the confusion was far from ended, for the friends of Miss Mudie persisted in calling for her again, and in hissing Miss Searle; while she was no less loudly applauded, and supported, by the opposite side of the house.

A person in the pit, with much more zeal than discretion, called aloud several times to a particular box, *Silence that fool in the boxes:* to which the other replied, *Silence that ass in the pit.* The tumult scarcely decreased through the whole act; but Mr. Kemble did every thing which prudence seemed to require: for, had Miss Mudie either continued the part, or appeared again, the probability of danger was great.

To criticize a child, or to wound the wounded, would be equally unworthy; we have only to congratulate the town on these symptoms of returning sanity.

On Thursday evening, the 21st, a new ballet was performed, called The Wild Islanders, composed by Mr. Byrne, in which he introduces himself instructing his son, young Oscar. This is, indeed, an extraordinary boy, as well for beauty of form as bodily powers and progress in the knowledge of dancing; an

exercise in which children are capable of displaying excellence that may afford amusement.

THE ART OF ACTING.

(*Continued from Vol. II. No. X. p.* 273.)

CHAP. IX.

IT generally happens that authors speak of their principal characters, and describe those grand outlines of manner and behaviour that are appropriate to them, which an actor ought carefully to study. In the beginning of the third act of Hamlet, the manner which the hero assumes is particularly described.

Rosencrantz. He does confess he feels himself distracted,
But from what cause he will by no means speak.
Guildenstern. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,
But with a crafty madness keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.
Queen. Did he receive you well?
Rosencrantz. Most like a gentleman.
Guildenstern. But with much forcing of his disposition.
Rosencrantz. Nigard of question, but of our demands
Most free in his reply.

This is a general description of the behaviour of Hamlet, when he reins in his passion, and conceals himself from those who wish to understand him.

His entrance, in the third act, begins with the following famous soliloquy:

Profound thought. To *be*, or *not* to be? *that* is the question——

Inquiry. Whether 'tis *nobler*, in the mind, to suffer
The slings and arrows of *outrageous* fortune;

Doubt. Or to take *arms* against a *sea of troubles*,
And by *opposing end* them?—To die;—to sleep;

Conclusion that is highly satisfactory. No *more?*—And, by a sleep, to say we end
The *heart-ach*, and the *thousand natural shocks*
That flesh is *heir* to?——'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be *wish'd*. To die;—to sleep;—

Returning doubt. To *sleep!* Perchance to *dream?* *Ay*, *there's* the rub;——

Dread.
For, in that *sleep of death*, what *dreams may come*,
When we have *shuffled off* this *mortal* coil,

Cause.
Must give us *pause*. *There's* the respect
That makes *calamity* of so *long life*;

Argument rising to indignation.
For *who* would *bear* the *whips and scorns* of time,
The *oppressor's wrong*, the *proud man's contumely*,
The *pangs* of *despis'd love*, the *law's delay*,
The *insolence* of *office*, and the *spurns*
That *patient merit* of the *unworthy* takes,
When *he himself* might his *quietus* make
With a *bare* bodkin! *Who* would *fardels* bear,
To *groan* and *sweat* under a *weary* life;

Profound and serious reflection, and conclusion.
But that the *dread* of *something after death*—
The *undiscover'd country* from whose *bourn*
No traveller returns——*puzzles* the *will*;
And makes us rather *bear* those *ills* we have,
Than fly to *others* that we *know* not of!
Thus conscience does make *cowards* of us *all*;
And *thus* the *native* hue of *resolution*
Is *sickly'd* o'er with the *pale* cast of thought,
And enterprizes of *great pith* and *moment*,
With *this regard*, their currents *turn awry*,
And *lose* the *name of action.*

When Ophelia enters, the feelings of Hamlet are generally outraged by the actor: he appears to persecute, nay to bully, Ophelia, as he is generally represented. I cannot conceive how this mistake, which now seems as if it were traditional, could get possession of the stage: perhaps it originated in the strong feelings which Mr. Garrick threw into the scene, but still no doubt with a strict adherence to the intention of the author.

The mind of Hamlet is wholly absorbed by a master passion: he owns to Ophelia that he loved her once, though he pretends not now, and partly to soften such a repulse, partly to conceal the true feelings of his heart, while he justly suspects Ophelia is put upon him to wrest its secret from his lips, he affects a kind of rational distraction, cautions her, very truly and in some sort pathetically, to beware of the dangers of the marriage state warns her against the wickedness of man, and then of the

world, advises her rather to become a nun than to risk being a wife, and thus endeavours to persuade her that the loss of him, should she think it one, is a benefit.

The satire of the two last speeches is further intended for her advantage, by pointing out what women then generally were, and, by exciting her disgust, to induce her to shun such mistakes: concluding with the advice to live single, which actors generally thunder forth with a tone of menace, instead of sympathetic friendship. Briefly, this is a delicate scene; and the manner of performing it ought to be deeply considered, by the actor; who, if he perform it well, must have feeling, discrimination, and a full understanding of his character.

Hamlet next appears in company with the players; and, short as is the scene, when I read it, I am almost ashamed of writing a long treatise on the art of acting, the rules for excellence in which are there so admirably given, and its general defects so pointedly described. Shakspeare has infused his whole soul into the character of Hamlet; and, in the vast circle of poetry and of prose, I am acquainted with no single example of such comprehensive and astonishing genius.

When Horatio enters, he there minutely explains to his friend what his intention is, in having a play performed before the king. The actor should be well aware of the very serious and fervent manner, in which he warns Horatio to observe his uncle.

Immediately afterward, the play begins, and the whole faculties and soul of Hamlet are intent upon the motions of the king. No enthusiasm of the actor can be too great for the fervor of this scene; and, if it be true that the manner of performing it formerly was that of Mr. Garrick, it was indeed a strange mistake; for it was that of endeavouring to give it a satirical and easy levity, instead of an earnest, an impassioned, and what may be called a heart-rending inquiry:

> Did this man kill my father, or did he not?

To the good actor, it is a treasure: it is one of the scenes in the play which will bring him the most applause.

The triumph of his mind, mingled however with horror, at the certitude which he has obtained of the king's guilt, is that which occasions his resentful behaviour to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, when they again return, to sift his disposition; and the actor should thoroughly understand the passionate yet keen satire, with which he contemns and dismisses both them and Polonius.

No sooner are they gone than he declares the true temper of his mind.

> Now could I drink hot blood,
> And do such business as the bitter day
> Would quake to look on.

Hamlet is next seen with his mother, and in this part of the character actors are more seldom mistaken than in any other, for it is less difficult than any other: the feelings are so genuine, so generous, so manly, and yet so obvious, that they are seldom greatly misrepresented. Still, however, different performers will afford different degrees of pleasure: such as are the natural result of sound understanding and strength of feeling.

I shall conclude the act with observing that, when Hamlet bids his mother good night, but warns her not to go to his uncle's bed, continuing to enforce this warning through many lines, they ought particularly to be delivered with the full affection of a son, who is deeply afflicted, and has a stinging sense of the sensual and depraved nature of her marriage with his uncle.

(*To be continued.*)

ESSAY ON DRAMATIC COMPOSITION

(*Continued from Vol.* II. *No.* IX. *p.* 200.)

IF the rules of criticism, which have generally been received, be false in pretension and pernicious in practice, as is here supposed, nothing can be more desirable for the future progress of the dramatic art, grand as it is in its nature and important in its effects, than to subvert their malignant influence. This can no otherwise be done than by taking every means of diffusing the contrary opinion; and I would stimulate all those to make this exertion, who, after a due and deliberate inquiry

into the subject, shall, like myself, be fully persuaded of the falsity, vanity, and dogmatism of the unities of time and place. The partisans of the contrary opinion are requested to examine the nature of all the fine arts, and they will find that the foundation of them all is not in things that *are* present to the hearer or the spectator, but that either *have been or may be*. In a picture, the action that is represented is not then really performing, but it has been performed, or it may be. The same may be said of the picture of a place; for though Rome is supposed actually to exist, it may, for ought we know, by some visitation of Providence, be destroyed, while we are examining its panorama, and it certainly does not exist except to the deceived eye and imagination in the place where the panorama is exhibited. Music is but a collection of sounds, which associates and brings to mind the cries of nature and the passions of men. This, it is at least presumed, is the origin of music. Poetry is a still more precise, and therefore a more impressive narration of events and emotions, and the dramatic art consists in putting this narration of the events and emotions of men into the mouths of persons to whom they are supposed to have happened.

Since, therefore, all is supposition, is it not highly absurd in those who contend for the dramatic unities of time and place, to assert that they are founded in reality, and that, whenever they are violated, reality is destroyed? In dramatic exhibition nothing that relates to the story is real: the time, the place, and the persons, are all a fiction.

This is not matter of opinion, it is matter of fact. The subject has been so exceedingly well handled by Doctor Johnson, in his preface to Shakspeare, that, in order to influence those who may be influenced by authority, though they might slightly examine and therefore not be convinced by argument, I will here transcribe the whole passage, as I find it in the second volume of his works *.

"To the unities of time and place he [Shakspeare] has shown no regard; and, perhaps, a nearer view of the principles on which they stand will diminish their value, and with-

* Vol. II. p. 95. London 1801. Octavo.

draw from them the veneration which, from the time of *Corneille*, they have very generally received, by discovering that they have given more trouble to the poet, than pleasure to the auditor.

"The necessity of observing the unities of time and place arises from the supposed necessity of making the drama credible. The critics hold it impossible that an action of months and years can be possibly believed to pass in three hours, or that the spectator can suppose himself to sit in the theatre, while ambassadors go and return between distant kings, while armies are levied and towns besieged, while an exile wanders and returns, or till he, whom they saw courting his mistress, shall lament the untimely fall of his son. The mind revolts from evident falsehood, and fiction loses its force when it departs from the resemblance of reality.

"From the narrow limitation of time necessarily arises the contraction of place. The spectator, who knows that he sees the first act at *Alexandria*, cannot suppose that he sees the next at *Rome*, at a distance to which not the dragons of *Medea* could, in so short a time, have transported him; he knows with certainty that he has not changed his place; and he knows that place cannot change itself; that what was a house cannot become a plain; that what was *Thebes* can never be *Persepolis*.

"Such is the triumphant language with which a critic exults over the misery of an irregular poet, and exults commonly without resistance or reply. It is time, therefore, to tell him, by the authority of *Shakspeare*, that he assumes, as an unquestionable principle, a position which, while his breath is forming into words, his understanding pronounces to be false. It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramatic fable, in its materiality, was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited.

"The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at *Alexandria*, and the next at *Rome*, supposes, that when the play opens, the spectator really imagines himself at *Alexandria*, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to *Egypt*, and that he lives in the days of *Antony* and *Cleopatra*. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more.

"He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the *Ptolemies*, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of *Actium*. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can be once persuaded, that his old acquaintance are *Alexander* and *Cæsar*, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of *Pharsalia*, or the bank of *Granicus*, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth, and, from the heights of empyrean poetry, may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in ecstasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brain that can make the stage a field.

"The truth is, that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players. They came to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation. The lines relate to some action, and an action must be in some place; but the different actions that complete a story may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first *Athens*, and then *Sicily*, which was always known to be neither *Sicily* nor *Athens*, but a modern theatre?

"By supposition, as place is introduced, time may be extended; the time required by the fable elapses for the most part between the acts; for, of so much of the action as is represented, the real and poetical duration is the same. If, in the first act, preparations for war against *Mithridates* are represented to be made in *Rome*, the event of the war may, without absurdity, be represented, in the catastrophe, as happening in *Pontus*; we know that there is neither war nor preparation for war; we know that we are neither in *Rome* nor *Pontus*; that neither *Mithridates* nor *Lucullus* are before us. The drama exhibits successive imitations of successive actions; and why may not the second imitation represent an action that happened years after the first, if it be so connected with it, that nothing but time can be supposed to intervene? Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination; a lapse of

years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and therefore willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation.

"It will be asked, how the drama moves, if it is not credited. It is credited with all the credit due to a drama. It is credited, whenever it moves, as a just picture of a real original, as representing to the auditor what he would himself feel, if he were to do or suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflection that strikes the heart is not, that the evils before us are real evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the players, but that we fancy ourselves unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery, as a mother weeps over her babe, when she remembers that death may take it from her. The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.

"Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. When the imagination is recreated by a painted landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade, or the fountains coolness: but we consider how we should be pleased with such fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us. We are agitated in reading the history of *Henry the Fifth*, yet no man takes his book for the field of *Agincourt*. A dramatic exhibition is a book recited with concomitants that increase or diminish its effect. Familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatres than in the page, imperial tragedy is always less. The humor of *Petruchio* may be heightened by grimace, but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of *Cato*?

"A play read affects the mind like a play acted. It is therefore evident, that the action is not supposed to be real; and it follows, that between the acts a longer or shorter time may be allowed to pass, and that no more account of space or duration is to be taken by the auditor of a drama, than by the reader of

a narrative, before whom may pass in an hour the life of a hero, or the revolutions of an empire.

"Whether *Shakspeare* knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide, and useless to inquire. We may reasonably suppose, that when he rose to notice, he did not want the councils and admonitions of scholars and critics, and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice, which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented, that they were not known by him, or not observed: nor, if such another poet could arise, should I very vehemently reproach him, that his first act passed at *Venice*, and his next in *Cyprus*. Such violations of rules merely positive become the comprehensive genius of *Shakspeare*, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of *Voltaire*.

> '*Non usque adeo permiscuit imis*
> *Longus summa dies, ut non, si voce Metelli*
> *Serventur leges, malint a Cæsare tolli.*'

"Yet, when I speak thus slightly of dramatic rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me; before such authorities I am afraid to stand; not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected that these precepts have not been so easily received, but for better reasons than I have yet been able to find. The result of my inquiries, in which it would be ludicrous to boast of impartiality, is, that the unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama, that though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction; and that a play, written with nice observation of critical rules, is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity; as the product of superfluous and ostentatious art, by which is shown, rather what is possible, than what is necessary."

DRAMATIC ANECDOTES.

A French actor, accustomed to perform the part of Achilles, wished to have his portrait taken, and desired it might be in that character, stipulating to give the painter forty crowns for his work. This son of Melpomene had been a journeyman carpenter, and the painter, who was informed that he was a bad paymaster, thought proper to devise a mode of being revenged should Achilles play him any trick; he therefore painted the figure in oil, the shield excepted, which was in distemper. The likeness was acknowledged to be great; but the actor, that he might pay as little as possible, pretended to find many faults, and declared he would only pay half the sum agreed upon. "Well," replied the painter, "I must be content; however, I will give you a secret for making the colors more brilliant. Take a sponge, dip it in vinegar, and pass it over the picture several times." The actor thanked him for this advice, applied the sponge, washed away the shield of Achilles, and, instead of that hero, beheld a carpenter holding a saw.

The famous Baron was both an author and an actor: he wrote a comedy in five acts called *Les Adelphes*, taken from The Adelphi of Terence; and a few days before it was perperformed the Duke *de Roquelaure*, addressing him, said, "Will you show me your piece, Baron? You know I am a connoisseur. I have promised three women of wit, who are to dine with me, the feast of hearing it; come and dine with us: bring it in your pocket, and read it yourself. I am desirous to know whether you are less dull than Terence." Baron accepted the invitation, and found two countesses and a marchioness at table, who testified the most impatient desire to hear the piece. They were however in no haste to rise from table, and, when their long repast was ended, instead of thinking of Baron, they called for cards. "Cards?" cried the duke. "Surely, ladies, you have no such intention? You forget that

Baron is here to read you his new comedy?" 'Oh, no; we have not forgotten that,' replied one of them, 'he may read while we are at play, and we shall have two pleasures instead of one.' Baron immediately rose, walked to the door, and, with great indignation, rēplied, his comedy should not be read to card-players. This incident was brought on the stage by *Poincinct*, in his comedy of the *Cercle*.

Adherbal Roi de Numidie is a tragedy written by *La Grange-Chancel*, of which he gives the following interesting anecdotes:

"When I supposed I had finished my tragedy, I ventured to lay it before the Princess of *Conti*. Notwithstanding its many defects, the princess found enough in it to attract her attention, and therefore sent to the celebrated Racine, and kindly begged him to read a piece written by a young gentleman, a page in her service, and freely and unequivocally to give her his opinion of it. Racine kept it a week, returned to the princess, and told her that he had read my tragedy with astonishment. That to be sure it was defective in many respects, but that, if her highness would suffer me sometimes to come and advise with him, it would shortly be in a state to be successfully represented. I failed not to be with him every day, and I can truly affirm that I learned more from him than from all the books I had read. He sometimes took a pleasure in conversing on the different subjects, fabulous and historical, which he had considered, and in which he discovered interesting situations, failing not to acquaint me with them. My tragedy being finished, it was presented and received. Instead of Jugurtha, under which title a tragedy by *Péchantré* had been lately condemned, it was determined to call it Adherbal. The Prince of Conti, who was kind enough to be present at the first representation, placed me beside himself upon the stage, saying that my youth would shut the mouth of criticism. Racine, who from devotion or from policy no longer frequented the theatre, the king having prescribed the same privation to himself, was however present the first time of performance,

and seemed to take extreme pleasure every time I was applauded."

Boyer, a French dramatic author, had been fifty years writing and never successfully. That he might prove whether his condemnation might not be imputed to the prejudice of the pit, he gave it to be understood that the new tragedy of Agamemnon was the production of *Pader D'Assezan*, a young man newly arrived at Paris. The piece was received with general applause, and Racine himself, the great scourge of *Boyer*, declared in favor of the new author. "And yet it is by *Boyer*, *Mons. de Racine*," exclaimed *Boyer* himself, from the pit. Imprudent man! The next day the tragedy was hissed.

When *Dancourt* gave a new piece, if it were unsuccessful, to console himself he was accustomed to go and sup with two or three of his friends, at the sign of the Bagpipes kept by *Cheret*. One morning, after the rehearsal of his comedy called the *Agioteurs*, or Stock-brokers, which was to be performed, for the first time, that evening, he asked one of his daughters, not ten years of age, how she liked the piece? "Ah, papa," said the girl, "you'll go to night and sup at the sign of the Bagpipes."

It is a common practice in Paris, to read new theatrical pieces in private assemblies, where they are supposed to undergo a kind of primary ordeal, and over each of which a lady always presides. A tragedy called *Alzaide*, by *Linant*, had been read at one of those societies, and obtained great praise; however, it had no success on the stage, which greatly afflicted this previous tribunal. Being assembled the day after its performance, there was a general silence; but the lady, who had first given her favorable suffrage, spoke at length and said—"The piece, however, was not hissed."—"How the deuce could it?" replied a stranger, who happened to be present; "people cannot gape and hiss both at once."

When the tragedy of *Alzire*, by Voltaire, was first perform-

ed, some persons busily whispered that it was not his own work. "I wish it may not be," said a man of wit. 'Why so?' asked a person present. "Because," answered he, "we should then have two good poets instead of one."

When Lewis XIV. had commanded *Quinault* to write the opera of *Amadis*, a report was current that the poet was much embarrassed by the work. *Quinault* took this occasion to write a madrigal, which he entitled

L'OPERA DIFFICILE.

Ce n'est pas l'opéra, que je fais pour le roi,
Qui m'empêche d'être tranquille,
Tout ce qu'on fait pour lui paroit toujours facile;
La grande peine où je me voi
C'est d'avoir cinq filles chez moi,
Dont la moins âgée est nubile.
Je dois les établir, et voudrois le pouvoir,
Mais à suivre Apollon on ne s'enrichit guère;
C'est avec peu de bien un terrible devoir,
De se sentir pressé d'être cinq fois beau père.
Quoi! Cinq actes devant notaire,
Pour cinq filles qu'il faut pourvoir!
Oh ciel! peut-on jamais avoir
Opera plus fâcheux à faire?

Whene'er to please the king I write,
The labor gives me great delight:
Of that I never can complain;
Mine is a very diff'rent pain:
For those I love, could I provide,
It were my pleasure, nay, my pride!
But, lab'ring in Apollo's mine,
When wealth shall come I can't divine.
Five marriageable girls, on hand,
Five sep'rate fortunes will demand;
And five young husbands I must pay;
I don't pretend to fix the day—
Must five times this paternal part
Perform. How difficult this art!
These are the cares that break my rest:
Remove them Heav'n, and I am blest!

Three of poor Quinault's daughters were afterward made nuns: only two of them were married.

On the first night of the performance of *L'Amant Indiscret*, *Quinault*, the author of that comedy, took a country gentleman with him to see it, who came to Paris on account of a law-suit, and with whom he had just been in search of his attorney. The country gentleman was infinitely surprised, when the piece was over, to hear persons of the first rank congratulate *Quinault*, and to see them publicly embrace him; but his surprise was still more increased when he afterward heard *Quinault* discuss points of law with his attorney, and state the case of the gentleman, his friend, so clearly that he foresaw he should gain his cause. The genius of *Quinault* appeared to be universal.

A bad French actor, having taken disgust at the reception he had met with and quitted the stage, being soon afterward at Versailles, was met by some young noblemen, who knew him, and who asked him what good news he brought from Paris? "None," replied he, "for my part, I have taken leave of the public. I am now no longer an actor." 'Oh,' said they, 'that is very good news indeed.'

Dufresny, a French author, having written *L'Amant masqué* in three acts, had it reduced to one act by the performers; and his comedies of five acts were also generally reduced to three. "What," said he, excessively piqued, "shall I never get a five act piece on the stage?" 'Oh, yes,' answered the *Abbé Pellegrin*, 'you have only to write a comedy in eleven acts; six of which will be retrenched by the comedians.'

In France the comedians are their own managers; except so far as government interferes.

A lover, to enjoy the company of his mistress, acted the part of a hobgoblin, to frighten the family; which furnished the subject of a French comedy, called *L'Amour Diable*, written by *Le Grand*. These kind of ghosts have often ap-

peared in Paris, and all other great cities. In 1770, the devil was heard nightly to play the lute, in a music shop. This devil was also suspected to be a lover. Twenty years before that, the devil chose the shop of a corn-chandler as the seat of his nightly orgies. On the comedy of *Le Grand* the following critique appeared—"The father is a lunatic; the daughter shameless; the boy a libertine; the tutor a drunkard; the lover a seducer; and the mother not much better than the rest, since it troubles her but little should her husband prove to be the devil himself."

Rameau had not written the music of one of his operas before he had attained the age of 55; though he afterward became so famous. He engaged the *Abbé Pellegrin*, the author of the poem of *Jephthah*, to write the tragedy of *Hippolytus and Aricia*; but not till he had given his note of hand for the payment of fifty pistoles, and even then the Abbé thought he run a great risk. The first act of this tragi-comedy was performed at the house of a rich person, who pompously favored the arts: the Abbé was present, and was so struck, by the harmonies and melodies he heard, that he publicly tore the note, which he had required of *Rameau*; remarking that there was no necessity for taking precautionary notes, from such a musician.

When this opera first appeared, the fanaticism in favor of the old style of music was so great that it was decried, and its representations were dropped. *Rameau* however was not discouraged: "I am deceived," said he; "I thought my manner would have pleased: " be it as it will, it is that which I have adopted, nor shall I alter my plan."

The Prince of Conti asked *Campra* what he thought of *Hippolytus and Aricia?* who replied, "There was music enough in it for ten operas." When *Campra* first heard the style of *Rameau*, he was so astonished that he exclaimed, "Here is a man that will eclipse us all."

MISCELLANIES.

A Report has prevailed that the editor has given offence, in the lists of the actors at both houses, by printing their namesin capitals, italics, and roman. Nothing could be further from his intention than to give cause of offence; for, though he would on all occasions maintain the right of an independent opinion, and must freely express that opinion when necessary, he would carefully abstain from conveying equivocal hints, that might injure. He admires the dramatic art, and the artists, too sincerely to be the enemy of either: he did not mean to insinuate that there are not many degrees of relative excellence, and he only intended to honor individuals who deserve to be distinguished, without having it in his power, in a catalogue of names, to weigh to a scruple the merit of each. Could he do this, he would but increase the imaginary causes of discontent. He, who writes on individual merit, while living, must either offend individual merit, or common sense. Those whom the editor greatly admires, he certainly does not wish unnecessarily to offend.

COSTUME.

The present number contains three figures of Indian Costume: a Doorea, or Dog-keeper; a Chokeedar; and an Ayah, or Waiting-woman to ladies, native or European.

The Chokeedar, or Watchman, is employed by government, in the police; and by individuals, to guard their habitations by night. In the northern parts of Hindostan, it is almost impossible for a European, in a private station, to enjoy security, without taking into pay, as Chokeedars, some persons from a gang of robbers.

The likeness of Mrs. Jordan, and that of Mr. Elliston, both given in the last number, were so great as to afford general satisfaction. Those of Miss Smith and of Mr. Stephen Kemble, designed by the same artist as the former (Miss Emma Smith) our readers may be sure are equally strong; of which the persons who happen to be acquainted with these performers will be convinced, the moment they are seen.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The favor of **C. D. E.** *is received, and his kind advice will be considered.*

Mr. Henry Shroeder is respectfully informed that his poem does not properly class with theatrical subjects: beside other objections, that make it inadmissible.

The favor of Thespian *came too late.*

MONTHLY LIST, FOR NOVEMBER, 1805.

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

OCT.
28 Romeo and Juliet - - - - - - - - - The Soldier's Return.
29 A Prior Claim - - - - - - - - - - The Humorist.
30 A Prior Claim - - - - - - - - - - The Deserter.
31 A Prior Claim - - - - - - - - - - The Anatomist.

NOV.
1 A Prior Claim - - - - - - - - - - Terpsichore's Return (Mlle. Parissot's appearance.)
2 The Siege of Belgrade
Mr. Braham, and Signora Storace's first appearance.
Mr. Miller's (a new performer) first appearance. - - - - - The Pannel.
4 A Prior Claim - - - - - - - - - - Terpsichore's Return, and The Lying Valet.
5 A Prior Claim - - - - - - - - - - Terpsichore's Return, and The Mock Doctor.
6 The Siege of Belgrade - - - - - - - Two Strings to your Bow.
7 A Prior Claim - - - - - - - - - - Terpsichore's Return, and The Apprentice.
8 A Prior Claim - - - - - - - - - - The Citizen.
9 The Siege of Belgrade - - - - - - The Anatomist, and Terpsichore's Return.
11 A Prior Claim - - - - - - - - - - Victory and Death of Lord Viscount Nelson, and The Doctor and Apothecary.
12 The Cabinet - - - - - - - - - - Victory and Death of Lord Viscount Nelson, and Ditto.
13 The Suspicious Husband - - - - - Victory and Death of Lord Viscount Nelson, and The Humorist.
14 The Cabinet - - - - - - - - - - Victory and Death of Lord Viscount Nelson, and The Lyar.
15 A Bold Stroke for a Wife - - - - Victory and Death of Lord Viscount Nelson, and No Song No Supper.
16 The Cabinet - - - - - - - - - - Victory and Death of Lord Viscount Nelson, and The Mock Doctor.
18 The Wheel of Fortune - - - - - Victory and Death of Lord Viscount Nelson, and The Weathercock.
19 The Cabinet - - - - - - - - - - Victory and Death of Lord Viscount Nelson, and The Weathercock.
20 The West Indian - - - - - - - - The Weathercock.
21 The Haunted Tower - - - - - - The Weathercock.
22 The Country Girl - - - - - - - - The Weathercock.
23 The Haunted Tower - - - - - - The Weathercock.
25 The Wonder - - - - - - - - - - Tepsichore's Return, and The Weathercock.
26 The Honey Moon - - - - - - - Terpsichore's Return, and The Weathercock.

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

OCT.
28 Speed the Plough - - - - - - - - Rugantino.
29 Macbeth - - - - - - - - - - - - Rugantino.
30 The Cabinet - - - - - - - - - - Rugantino.
31 Venice Preserved - - - - - - - - Rugantino.

NOV.
1 John Bull - - - - - - - - - - - - Rugantino.
2 Pizarro - - - - - - - - - - - - - Rugantino.
4 The English Fleet - - - - - - - - Rugantino.
5 Macbeth - - - - - - - - - - - - Rugantino.
6 She Would and She Would Not - Rugantino.
7 Venice Preserved - - - - - - - - Nelson's Glory, and The Quaker.
8 Wild Oats - - - - - - - - - - - - Nelson's Glory, and The Village Lawyer.
9 Pizarro - - - - - - - - - - - - - Nelson's Glory, and Rosina.
11 Macbeth - - - - - - - - - - - - Nelson's Glory, and The Midnight Hour.
12 Venice Preserved - - - - - - - - Nelson's Glory, and The Sultan.
13 Isabella - - - - - - - - - - - - Nelson's Glory, and The Turnpike Gate.
14 The Delinquent (Mrs. H. Johnston's first appearance.) - - - - The Quaker.
15 The Delinquent - - - - - - - - - Rugantino.
16 The Delinquent - - - - - - - - - Dermot and Kathlane, and Out of Place.
18 The Delinquent - - - - - - - - - Rugantino.
19 The Delinquent - - - - - - - - - Dermot and Kathlane, and The Devil to Pay.
20 The Delinquent - - - - - - - - - Rugantino.
21 The Delinquent - - - - - - - - - The Wild Islanders, and The Prisoner at Large.
22 The Delinquent - - - - - - - - - The Wild Islanders, and Rugantino.
23 The Country Girl (Miss Mudie's first appearance.) - - - - - - - - - - - - The Wild Islanders, and The Miser.
25 The Delinquent - - - - - - - - - The Wild Islanders, and Paul and Virginia.
26 The Man of the World - - - - - The Wild Islanders, and Lock and Key.